Report Card on Homelessness in Hamilton

April 3, 2002

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Errata to the Report Card on Homelessness in Hamilton

April 3rd, 2002

Page 39 -- Priority Area Recommendation #29 changes from red to yellow.

Page 52 -- Add, under the Category **Income Supports and Benefits**,

"The following task in this category has not been addressed:

Recommendation #26

Ensuring that 16 and 17 year olds can receive social assistance without having to meet the school attendance requirement."

Page 54 -- Recommendation #38 is moved from the Category **Housing Support** to page 56 under **Personal Security**.

Page 59 -- Delete Recommendation #15. See page 58.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The alarm has been sounded, the flags have been raised, national disasters have been declared, yet the crisis of homelessness has deepened and become more firmly entrenched in our communities and in our psyches. Since 1998, the Regional Advisory Committee on Food and Shelter and the Solutions for Housing Action Committee (SHAC), in partnership with the Social Planning and Research Council have not only been documenting the growing crisis but also advocating for the energy, creativity and especially the resources needed to halt the disaster and solve the problem. The issue is complex, it involves a range of personal tragedies and systemic injustices, which are often intertwined with the two constants to the homelessness crisis, poverty and housing.

This report consists of two main sections. The first is an update and analysis of the homelessness trends in Hamilton that first appeared in *Our Homes and Our Streets* (SPRC, 1999). It contains statistics on homelessness indicators like emergency shelter use, poverty indicators such as trends in social assistance caseloads, and housing indicators such as vacancy rates and average rents in the City of Hamilton.

These trends show that the crisis in of homelessness in Hamilton has indeed worsened. Key findings include:

- The crisis of homelessness in Hamilton has escalated dramatically since 1998. The number of people staying in emergency shelters on a given night has increased from 172 in 1998 to 343 in November 2001.
- Women's shelters, in particular, are having to turn people away on a nightly basis; this requires immediate attention.
- Temporary emergency measures for families such as motel and hotel accommodation have skyrocketed since 1998.
- With the increasing poverty in our community, more and more people with low incomes are forced to make difficult choices about how to make ends meet every month.
- Social assistance rates, particularly for Ontario Works benefits, are extremely inadequate and leaving people at risk of homelessness. The shelter portion of the allowance falls seriously short of average rents, while the costs for basic necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing exceed the maximum benefit levels.
- Long term solutions, like the H.O.M.E.S. program, are successful, and should be expanded.
- The housing market in Hamilton has changed drastically since 1998. Average rents have increased 13% since 1998 and vacancy rates in the CMA have plunged from 3.2% to 1.3%.
- The private rental market is not producing new units in spite of the increased demands and an estimated need of 770 new units annually.

- With long waiting lists and waits of up to 5 years there is an urgent need for social housing in this community.

The second section of this report is an evaluation of the progress made during the past year by the community in addressing the recommendations in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton*. This section evaluates progress on all 44 recommendations outlined in the Plan, as requested by the community through a consultation process.

The degree of progress that has been made on each recommendation was determined by comparing the positive actions that have been taken with those parts of each recommendation that have not been addressed. Following a traffic light analogy, each recommendation was assigned one of three colours: green, yellow, or red, depending on the degree of progress made on that recommendation. A green colour indicates successful completion of that recommendation, yellow indicates that the recommendation is either in progress or has been partly addressed, and a red colour denotes that the recommendation has not been addressed.

Of the 44 recommendations in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*, 15 are green, 18 are yellow and 10 are red. Clearly this community has rallied together and made tremendous strides in addressing homelessness. Community agencies, along with local funding bodies the United Way of Burlington/Hamilton-Wentworth and the Hamilton Community Foundation, as well as the City of Hamilton, the Provincial Homelessness Initiative Fund and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, have been integral to the success of many of the recommendations, the Government of Canada's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) must be acknowledged as a key partner in this community's efforts. While limited in its scope and unable to address all 44 recommendations, SCPI funding contributed to 10 green light recommendations and 10 yellow light recommendations.

Key findings from this section include:

- Overall progress on the recommendations of the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* is good.
- The community has been working closely together to address homelessness issues.
- The recommendations in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* dealing with poverty, discrimination, and non-profit housing urgently need to be addressed.
- SCPI funding has contributed significantly to the improvement of the emergency shelter system in Hamilton.
- SCPI funding has contributed to the enhancement of support services for people experiencing homelessness, and programs that help prevent people from becoming homeless.
- Many of the essential programs and services developed with the help of SCPI funding will not be sustainable after March 2003.

- Transitional Housing services for women leaving abusive domestic situations have been in crisis over the past year. Immediate work needs to be done by the community to ensure the stability and further the expansion of this much needed service.
- Even with improvements to support services and the emergency shelter system in Hamilton, the problem of homelessness in Hamilton will only get worse if poverty, discrimination, and the lack of affordable housing in our community are not addressed.

Finally, the SPRC has formulated 8 recommendations based on the findings of this report. The recommendations are intended to guide further community discussion and planning around homelessness.

Recommendations

1. Tasks in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* dealing with issues of poverty and discrimination need to be addressed immediately.

2. Support should be given to the aboriginal community to address the extreme levels of poverty and homelessness among native peoples in Hamilton. One way of doing this would be to assist the aboriginal community to implement the recommendations of *The Homelessness Trail: The Voice of the People,* a community-based research document that recounts the plight of aboriginal homelessness in our community. See Appendix A.

3. The community should work to provide aboriginal people, new immigrants, refugees, racial minorities and other marginalized populations the supports and opportunities they need to meaningfully participate in community development and decision-making.

4. The opportunities and supports needed to meaningfully participate in the community as volunteers, emergency shelter staff, committee members, and researchers should be available to people with a history of homelessness. (Jim Ward has recently published a national study on how to involve people who are experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness in the work of community organizations).

5. Local, neighbourhood level solutions to poverty, food security and other issues should be explored and implemented.

6. Immediate work needs to be done to ensure the stability and further the expansion of transitional housing services for women leaving abusive domestic situations.

7. The community should lobby the Federal Government to provide on going funding for programs and services developed under the SCPI program.

8. The community should lobby, and then work with, the Federal and Provincial Governments to develop long-term national and provincial strategies to deal with poverty and the lack of affordable housing.

The Report Card on Homelessness has identified key trends and progress made on the status of homelessness in the City of Hamilton. It gives direction on the issues that are still outstanding from the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* as well as detailing what new trends have emerged since the Plan was written in 2000. The Report Card offers the tools needed to move to the next stage for the Plan.

The *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* was never intended to be a static document. As recommendations are successfully implemented and new trends emerge, the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* needs to be modified and updated to remain a relevant useful document for this community. The Report Card on Homelessness has made a first attempt at identifying areas where the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* needs to be revised, but it is the right and responsibility of the community to respond to these recommendations and further identify other issues that are impacting on the homeless situation.

The current crisis could have been avoided, and it can be reversed. With energy, creativity and sufficient resources, it is possible to ensure that everyone in our community has safe, adequate, affordable housing. Together, with the cooperation of all levels of government, we can ensure that this fundamental right is protected, and put an end to homelessness in our community.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton-Wentworth is solely responsible for the content and analysis contained in this report. We wish to thank Human Resources Development Canada and the City of Hamilton for providing the funds that made this report possible.

We would also like to express our appreciation of the work of the Evaluation Committee that provided guidance in developing this report: Rosemary Foulds, City of Hamilton; Dominic Verticchio, Community Advisory Board; Michelle Gold, District Health Council; John Eyles, McMaster University: Jeff Wingard, SPRC; and, Don Jaffray, SPRC, *ex officio*.

Thanks also to all those community members and organizations who provided their input into developing the framework for this report.

Focus Groups

Organizations:

Hamilton Executive Director's Aboriginal Coalition (HEDAC)
The Food and Shelter Committee
Community Consultation Committee on Social Housing (CCCOSH)
Solutions for Housing Action Committee (SHAC)
Street Outreach Steering Committee

People experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness:

Niwasa Head Start Preschool
Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO)
Living Rock Ministries
Wesley Urban Ministries, Wesley Centre
HOMES Program

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Susan Shepherd, Co-Author of the Toronto Report Card on Homelessness

We also wish to thank all those community organizations who took the time and effort needed to fill out the Homelessness Report Card Survey (See Appendix D for a complete list of those organizations participating in the Report Card Survey).

The authors of this report are also grateful to the administrative staff of the SPRC, Tammy Saunders, Sally Quider, and Shani Doherty, whose advice and hard work were invaluable to the development and design of this report.

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GLOSSARY

Absolute Homelessness
'Absolute homelessness' refers to an individual or family who are either living on the streets (including those who are living in tents, vacant buildings or in a car), staying in an emergency shelter or hostel, or staying temporarily with friends or family.

Case Management
Managed care for individual, covers all the activities of evaluating the client, planning care/service, referral, and follow-up.

CHAN
The Community Housing Access Network (CHAN) is a non-profit organization that coordinates the waiting list and therefore access to over 11,000 rent-geared-to-income housing units in the City of Hamilton.

Community Start Up Benefit (C-SUB)
Money that is available under certain circumstances through the Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Office to people who qualify for Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support benefits. Maximum benefits are $750 for a single person once every 12 months, and $1500 for people with one or more children.

De-institutionalization
'De-institutionalization' occurs when an individual is discharged from an institution, such as a psychiatric hospital or correctional facility or prison, into the community. In recent years, there has been a systemic move toward re-integrating individuals into the community who were formerly housed permanently in institutions.

Discharge Planning
The discharge plan is the mechanism that guides a team effort to achieve the successful transfer of the client from one stage of care to an alternate site of care, or to the termination of care. Implementation of the discharge plan is used to assure the safety and efficacy of the continuing care or self-sustaining care of the client. The discharge plan includes evaluation of the patient for the appropriateness of the discharge, determination of the optimal site of care and of the client resources and determination that financial resources are adequate.

Downloading
When senior levels of government shift areas of responsibility to lower levels of government. Responsibility for administering social housing, for example, once the responsibility of the Federal Government was transferred to the provinces. In Ontario, responsibility for administering social housing has recently been transferred (downloaded) from the Province to Ontario municipalities.

Emergency Shelter Capacity
The maximum amount of clients the emergency shelter can accommodate.

Foodbank

A 'food-bank' provides food hampers with 3 - 4 days of food to individuals and families in the community so that their 'food security' needs are met. Most food-banks can only be accessed once per month, and are staffed by volunteers, and stocked through donations.

Former City of Hamilton

City of Hamilton prior to amalgamation (Jan 1, 2001), did not include surrounding communities of Glanbrook, Dundas, Ancaster, Flamborough and Stoney Creek.

Food security

'Food security' refers to the ability of individuals and families to access adequate amounts of nutritionally balanced food. If these needs are not met in a community, then it may be said that the community's 'food security' needs are not met. Food security is a strong determinant of health.

Hamilton CMA

The Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) is used by Statistics Canada to compile statistics on a very large urban area (over 100,000 people), together with adjacent urban and rural areas, which have a high degree of economic and social integration with that urban area. The Hamilton CMA includes the City of Hamilton (with all its' 6 former municipalities), Burlington and Grimsby.

Housing

When 'housing' is referred to in this Plan as a goal it should be understood that it refers to safe, secure, affordable, adequate, accessible, permanent housing.

Meal program

A 'meal program' provides prepared meals to individuals and families. These are sometimes referred to as 'soup kitchens', and are usually staffed by volunteers, who prepare meals from donated food.

New City of Hamilton

Municipality which, following the amalgamation (Jan 1, 2001), now includes the former City of Hamilton, as well as five other area municipalities: Glanbrook, Dundas, Ancaster, Flamborough and Stoney Creek. The New City of Hamilton does not include Burlington or Grimsby.

Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

Income support program for people with disabilities. Also provides some employment supports for people with disabilities. ODSP rates have not been increased since 1995.

Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal

Established to resolve disputes between landlords and tenants and provide information on the Tenant Protection Act. Disputes include; evictions, privacy, rent increase and many other issues.

Ontario Works (OW)

Ontario Works is the income support program that replaced General Welfare Assistance in 1998. It is funded 80% by the Province of Ontario and 20% by municipalities. Ontario Works is delivered by the City of Hamilton and includes; financial support, referrals, training programs, childcare assistance and transportation for work-related activities. OW rates have not been increased since 1995.

Outreach programs
An outreach program actually connects directly with the community by going out into the community to meet people where they are, and to assist in connecting people with a variety of supportive services.

Poverty rate
The 'poverty rate' is the percentage of a given population living on less annual income than the 'Low Income Cut-Off' as defined by Statistics Canada.

Relative Homelessness
An individual or family is experiencing 'Relative homelessness' when they do not have safe, secure, adequate, accessible, permanent housing, or when they are spending greater than 50% of their income on housing.

Rent-Geared-to-Income Housing
This is housing where rent is calculated as approximately 30% of the tenant's income.

Second Level Lodging Homes
In 1980, the former City of Hamilton licensed what would be called second level lodging homes. The by-law regulated facilities that housed vulnerable adults, some mentally challenged, who were receiving accommodation, meals, laundry facilities, assistance with medication, 24-hour supervision and support to residents in daily living activities.

Social, Public, or Not-for-Profit Housing
All of these terms refers to not-for-profit housing. Some of this housing is offered as 'rent-geared-to-income' housing.

Supportive Housing
This refers to housing, usually permanent, in which tenants receive supportive services in order to maintain their housing and live in the community.

Supportive Services
'Supportive services' are those services that assist individuals in moving from a state of homelessness toward being housed, or help to prevent homelessness. They range from legal assistance to prevent an eviction, to food-banks providing individuals and families with needed food, to in-house programs that allow people to maintain their housing.

Tenant Protection Act
Passed by the Government of Ontario in 1998, it is the main law that sets out rules for tenants and landlords including rent increases, evictions, maintenance and other important issues for tenants.

Transitional Housing
A form of shelter where clients are allowed to stay for a longer period of time (usually up to one year) so that supportive services and programming can be made available in order to help that person obtain and keep permanent housing.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The alarm has been sounded, the flags have been raised, national disasters have been declared, yet the crisis of homelessness has deepened and become more firmly entrenched in our communities and in our psyches. Since 1998, the Regional Advisory Committee on Food and Shelter and the Solutions for Housing Action Committee (SHAC), in partnership with the Social Planning and Research Council have not only been documenting the growing crisis but also advocating for the energy, creativity and especially the resources needed to halt the disaster and solve the problem. The issue is complex; it involves a range of personal tragedies and systemic injustices, which are often intertwined with the two constants to the homelessness crisis, poverty and housing.

In the first part of this report, we show that the crisis of homelessness in Hamilton has indeed worsened. The growing crisis of homelessness carries with it serious personal and social costs. For a person without stable housing, everything else in life is threatened: relationships; self-esteem; the ability to find and maintain employment; the ability to access health care and education. Many of Hamilton's young people, aboriginal people, new immigrants, refugees, people of colour and older adults are being robbed of the chance to meaningfully participate in the life of our community.

Widespread homelessness is not inevitable, it is the result of government social policy. The current crisis could have been avoided, and it can be reversed. With energy, creativity and sufficient resources, it is possible to ensure that all but a very few can be housed with an income, and support services (if needed) for independent living.

Everyone in our community has a right to safe, adequate, affordable housing. Together, with the cooperation of senior levels of government, we can ensure that this fundamental right is protected, and put an end to homelessness in our community.

1.1 The Report Card on Homelessness

The purpose of the Report Card on Homelessness is two-fold: to document the state of homelessness in the City of Hamilton; and to evaluate the progress made over the past year on the 44 recommendations in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton.*

The first section of this report is an update and analysis of the homelessness trends in Hamilton that first appeared in *Our Homes and Our Streets* (SPRC, 1999). It contains statistics on homelessness indicators like emergency shelter use, poverty indicators such as the poverty rate, and housing indicators such as vacancy rates and average rents in the City of Hamilton.

The second section of this report is an evaluation of the progress made by the community in addressing the recommendations in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton.* In consulting with the community on what they wanted to see in a Report Card on homelessness, the community was clear that they wanted a report on all of the recommendations outlined in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton,* and not just on the recommendations eligible for the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) funding. (See section 1.2)

There are two main goals of this Report Card on Homelessness. First, to inform the community of the current homeless situation and of the work that they have done to improve it. Second, to provide an impetus for further community-based planning to address both new issues that have merged since *Our Homes and Our Streets* as well as recommendation that have not yet been addressed.

As was always the intent, the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton* and its recommendations are not static and are intended to evolve and change as solutions are found and new trends emerge. Further community consultation will be required to ensure that these issues and trends, as well as community solutions to them are included in an updated *Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton.*

1.2 Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI)

As was stated above, it is important to note that the purpose of this report is not to evaluate the SCPI program per se, but to evaluate our community's response to the homelessness crisis. That being said, the SCPI program has brought significant funds into this community, which need to be acknowledged in this report.

Through the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, the Government of Canada made a commitment to making a one-time contribution of $12.9 million to the City of Hamilton over three years to address the crisis of homelessness in our community.

A further $300,000 was provided to the aboriginal community under SCPI. As well, $2.1 million was allocated to address homelessness among young people in our community.

The range of project activities that are eligible under SCPI is narrower than the range of activities recommended in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*; therefore, before funding could be received, the City of Hamilton prepared *An Addendum to the Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton-Wentworth.* The purpose of the addendum was to identify which actions fit with both the recommendations in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* and the scope of eligible SCPI activities.

The City of Hamilton and the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness distributed SCPI funding. The Community Advisory Board was established by recruiting applicants from the health sector, social services, business, community agency/volunteer sector, youth, aboriginal persons, immigrant community and from people who are homeless. The Community Advisory Board was given the responsibility of allocating the federal SCPU money to community organizations working with people experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness. They have donated many hours of their time and energy to ensuring that SPCI funding is allocated according to the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness addendum.*

1.3 The Causes of Homelessness

Poverty

As in other Canadian communities, poverty rates began to rise significantly in the early 1990's. Hamilton was hit hard by the recessions of the early 1980's and early 1990's and faced massive job losses. This problem was made worse by cuts to social assistance at the Provincial level and, at the Federal level, by a tightening of unemployment insurance regulations.

The late 1990's was a period of strong economic growth in Canada. Despite strong economic growth, the number of people living below Statistics Canada unofficial poverty line continued to grow, though at a slower rate, due to job recovery. While the number of jobs created in Ontario increased substantially in the late 1990's, many of the jobs that were created were temporary, part-time, or minimum wage jobs.

As well, during the same period, the depth of poverty increased. The income of people living on fixed incomes, some older adults and some people with disabilities for example, and people working for minimum wage, has not kept pace with the cost of living.
Minimum wage rates, and fixed income programs, have not only remained stagnant, but fell in the 1990's by about 10% due to inflation. This has put an increasing number of people at-risk of homelessness.

Those receiving welfare benefits are some of the poorest people in our community. Social assistance benefits were cut in 1995 by 21.6%. It is estimated that approximately half of the people on social assistance in Hamilton are single mothers. This is reflected in increases in the number of single mothers using foodbanks, and alarming increases in emergency shelter use.

More and more often in our community, we see people who do not have enough money to pay the rent and be able to purchase nutritious food for their children. For low-income tenants, rent is typically their largest single expense. For low-income tenants living on fixed incomes or working for minimum wage, this has been especially disastrous since we have seen an increase of rents in Hamilton that has outpaced inflation 2-to-1. Those people in our community who have been able to hang on to their housing even though they are paying 50% or 70% of their total income on rent have had to cut back on nutritious food for their children and other essential costs of living in Hamilton.

As well, low-income homeowners have had to cut back on maintenance costs to their homes, which has contributed to a degradation of Hamilton's housing stock. As a result, many more people are living in unsafe housing.

Lack of Support Services

Other factors besides poverty have contributed to the growing crisis of homelessness in Hamilton. In the late 1990's, not only poverty, but the lack of funding for new affordable housing initiatives, and the withdrawal of funding from social services and public education, have contributed to the growing problem of homelessness on a national scale.

In the 1990's, governments at all levels faced large debts and deficits. In response to these budgetary constraints, governments at all levels made major cutbacks to social services and public education.

This has resulted in a lack of adequate support services for people with low incomes who are vulnerable to a housing crisis.

Lack of Affordable Housing

In the late 1990's, the crisis of homelessness was made even worse when first the Federal government, and then the Provincial government, eliminated programs to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing in Canadian municipalities.

In recent years, the housing market for people with middle and high range incomes has been booming. However, virtually no new rental housing with rents below the average market rents has been built in Hamilton since 1996. Even with low inflation and high average rents, there is little incentive for private developers to build rental housing with rents that will be affordable to people with low incomes.
There are a couple of reasons why average market rents are so high and unaffordable to many low-income tenants.

First, in 1998, the Provincial government introduced the *Tenant Protection Act*. The *Tenant Protection Act* does not, however, protect tenants. The elimination of rent controls has allowed rents to rise to market levels, putting average market rental units out of the reach of many people with low incomes.

With no new housing supply being built, demand has risen, putting downward pressure on vacancy rates, and pushing up the cost of rents. Across Ontario vacancy rates are at record lows.

Discrimination in the Housing Market

Hamilton is an ethnically diverse community in which racism and discrimination have been a source of on-going conflict.

Low-income immigrants, refugees, youth, aboriginal people, along with other communities that face discrimination in our community, face serious barriers to finding and maintaining housing.

Landlords are business people, many of whom are just trying to make a living. Like the rest of us, however, some landlords are blatantly racist, or make the mistaken assumption that a person will not be a good tenant if they are young, have an accent, or are on social assistance.

The high vacancy rates in Hamilton means that there is a high demand for low rent apartments. This allows landlords to choose to do so, to discriminate more easily.

Landlords are legitimately entitled to use their discretion when renting an apartment. In our tight rental market, however, reports of illegal discrimination are becoming more frequent.

The *Tenant Protection Act*, as well, gives additional legal powers to landlords to request information about income, credit, and references. However, these rules directly work against some immigrants and refugees who are newcomers to our community. If they cannot produce the requested information which, having just arrived in the country, they may not possess, it is a landlord's legal right to refuse them an apartment.

Prior to a recent Ontario human rights case, it was within the law to refuse a person an apartment based on their income.

Immigrants, refugees, aboriginal people, youth and members of other marginalized communities may also have trouble getting information about support services. Or, they may not be comfortable using these services, because of cultural differences or discrimination. They may not be able to access these services because of a physical disability or because they cannot speak English.

The elimination of social housing programs, and cutbacks to social services, and income supports, have allowed governments, in a climate of strong economic growth, to balance budgets and cut taxes. In general, however, these policy changes have contributed to the growing divide between the rich and poor, and a growing housing crisis.

Any real, and sustainable, solution to the crisis of homelessness in our community will have to address all four of these underlying root causes of homelessness.

Domestic Violence and Abuse

"In our society violence is a daily reality for many women" (Woman Abuse Working Group, 1998). It crosses all income and cultural lines; however, women from low-income families or women who face other forms of discrimination, options are few and often dismal.

We heard from youth, in our previous research, that many leave home for the streets because of the abuse they are experiencing. In both cases, violence and abuse can lead to homelessness. Temporary lodgings may be found with family and friends, but unless the woman or youth has adequate financial resources, they may be unable to access adequate housing and meet other basic needs. Women are more likely to be poor than men, 85% of all lone parent families are headed by women, and 64% of these families fall below the poverty line (*Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton-Wentworth 2000*). This means that women who are experiencing violence and are poor have to chose between remaining in the abusive situation or living in poverty with their children.

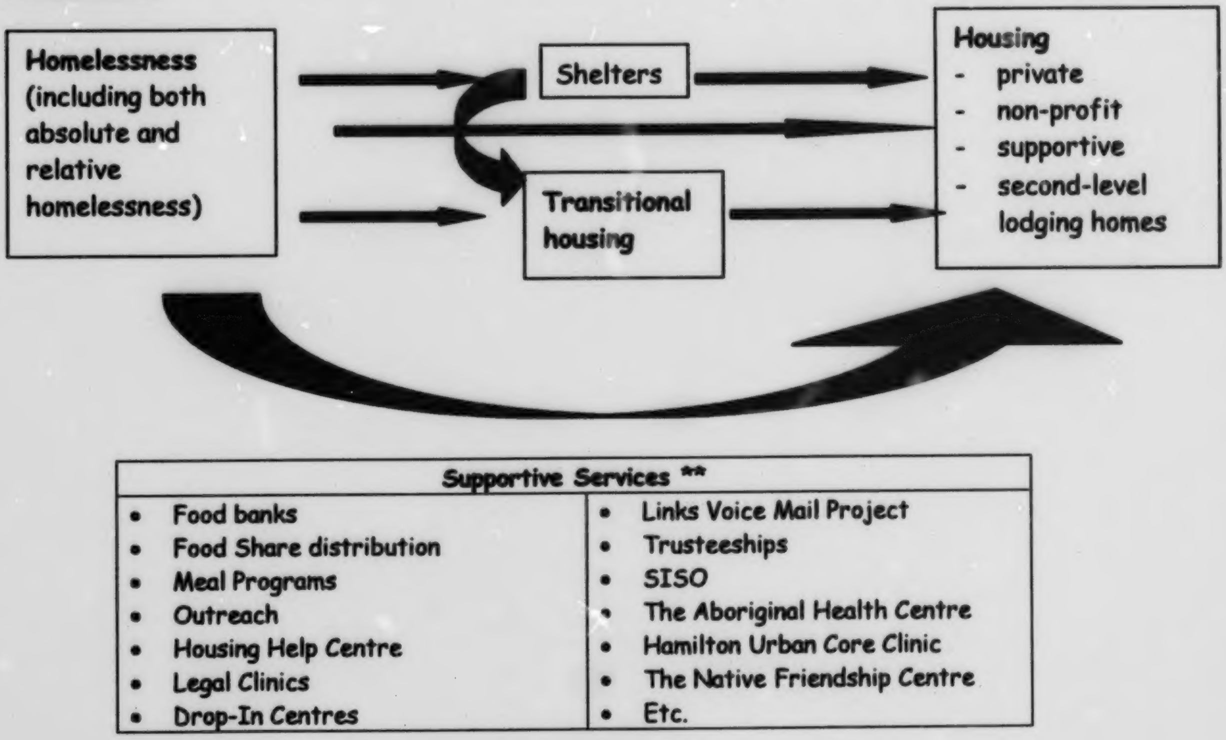
Youth, who generally have no income and have difficulty accessing social assistance, also face the impossible choice of homelessness or violence. This is compounded by the fact that being homeless often places people in situations that are unsafe and can also lead to violence and abuse. Again, it cannot be overstated that the options facing women and youth who are experiencing violence and abuse are few and dismal.

1.4 The Community Response

As many communities across Ontario began to record the plight of people who are homeless, so too did Hamilton. The Health of the Public Project Report *Homelessness and Mental Illness in the Hamilton-Wentworth Region* (1995) gives valuable insight into the problem and can be used to determine the rate of increase in the magnitude since that time. It is also a very useful report in that it was completed before the decrease in social assistance rates, commonly identified as a key factor in the current situation. *Our Homes and our Streets: Homelessness in Hamilton-Wentworth* released in 1999 by the Regional Advisory Committee on Food and Shelter, Solutions for Housing Action Committee and the Social Planning and Research Council, can be used as a benchmark for evaluating our communities successes and failures in the battle against homelessness.

The Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton-Wentworth (2000) outlined a plan for solving the homelessness crisis, which included 44 recommendations and corresponding actions addressing emergency crisis intervention at one end of the spectrum and broad-based systemic change at the other. This report organized data, recommendations and actions within a "pathways to housing" continuum that showed the ways in which a person might move from homelessness to safe, affordable, adequate housing. It also developed the definition for homelessness that we will use in this report as well. (See diagram #1).

Diagram: 1


Homelessness (including both absolute and relative homelessness)
Shelters
Transitional housing
Housing
- private
- non-profit
- supportive
- second-level lodging homes

Supportive Services **

- Food banks
- Food Share distribution
- Meal Programs
- Outreach
- Housing Help Centre
- Legal Clinics
- Drop-In Centres
- Links Voice Mail Project
- Trusteeships
- SISO
- The Aboriginal Health Centre
- Hamilton Urban Core Clinic
- The Native Friendship Centre
- Etc.

1.5 Defining Homelessness

In the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*, a distinction is made between absolute homelessness and relative homelessness.

Absolute homelessness refers to a state in which a growing number of people in our community find themselves, without a place to live, a place to call their own. They may be staying in an emergency shelter, sleeping in parks, or staying with a family member or friend. When most people hear the word "homeless," what they understand the word to mean is "houseless."

A person experiencing relative homelessness has a place to live, they are housed. A person who is relatively homeless, however, is marginally or inadequately housed. Their apartment or house may be unsafe and require major repairs. Their apartment or house may be overcrowded. Their apartment or house may not be affordable, that is, they may being paying more than 30% of their income on rent or housing costs. In the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton Wentworth 2000* and in this report a person is said to be relatively homeless, or at-risk of homelessness, if they are paying more than 50% of their income on rent or housing costs.

If the word "homeless" means "houseless," it would be more accurate to distinguish between being homeless and being inadequately, or marginally housed. A person who is inadequately or marginally housed may be said to be "at-risk of homelessness." This is what we will mean when we refer either to people "experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness."

The Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative

In 1999, the Federal government announced that it would provide $753 million nationally to address the growing crisis of homelessness. The National Secretariat on Homelessness headed by Minister of Parliament Claudette Bradshaw calls this program the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, or SCPI (pronounced "skippy") for short.

The Federal government identified Hamilton as one of ten cities in Canada to receive major SCPI funding based on general population, rental vacancy rates and low income. In June 2000, it was announced that the City of Hamilton would receive $12.9 million over three years of this funding to address the growing crisis of homelessness in our community.

In addition to the funding for SCPI, there was $59 million allocated in Canada to specifically address homelessness among aboriginal peoples. In Hamilton, the aboriginal community received $300,000 of this specific Aboriginal funding.

The Homelessness Steering Committee, which oversaw the development of the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton Wentworth 2000*, was made up largely of representatives from community organizations who work with people experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness as well as housing and tenant advocates. Some of these community organizations would be competing for SCPI dollars through a request for proposal process.

A Community Advisory Board on Homelessness was established by recruiting applicants from the health sector, social services, business, community agency/volunteer sector youth, aboriginal person, immigrant community and from homeless individuals. The Community Advisory Board was, was given the responsibility of allocating the Federal SCPI money to community organizations working with people experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness.

See Appendix F for a list of the projects funded through the SCPI program.

The Role of the SPRC

With the support of the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness, the SPRC has undertaken three major activities for the next two years.

1) To provide staff support and other resources to community organizations working to implement the recommendations of the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton Wentworth 2000*
2) To hold a series of public forums on the crisis of homelessness in our community, and
3) To prepare a *Report Card* on our community's response to homelessness in Hamilton.

2.0 TRENDS IN HOMELESSNESS IN HAMILTON

Since 1998, the SPRC has been collecting and reporting on homelessness trends in Hamilton. As a part of the *Report Card on Homelessness*, this section will update trends first reported in *Our Homes and Our Streets* (1999) and *The Community Action Plan on Homelessness* (2000). It also builds on the 1995 Health of the Public report: *Homelessness and Mental Illness in the Hamilton-Wentworth Region.*

This report will continue to expand its analysis of the growing crisis of homelessness in Hamilton. We have included trends and statistics here which help to give a more complete account of the variety of situations that can result in a person experiencing a housing crisis.

Though there are a surprising variety of circumstances that can result in a person becoming homeless, many of these circumstances can be traced back to the root causes outlined in the introduction: poverty, lack of affordable housing, lack of support services, discrimination and violence.

This report will examine three indicators which we will continue to monitor over time, and which will provide a context for the homelessness crisis in our community. First, we will look at local indicators of homelessness that have been developed by the SPRC or other community organizations such as emergency shelter usage and food bank usage. The report will then focus on indicators of the fundamental causes of homelessness: poverty and the lack of affordable housing. Many of the poverty indicators that we consider here come from demographic information provided by Statistics Canada. Many of the housing indicators, vacancy rates in Hamilton for example, are supplied by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

2.1 Homelessness Indicators

People who are experiencing homelessness stay in a wide variety of locations: on the streets, in the parks, in cars, in tents, in alleys, in abandoned buildings, doubled up with friends and family, in motels or hotels, and sometimes, in emergency shelters and hostels.

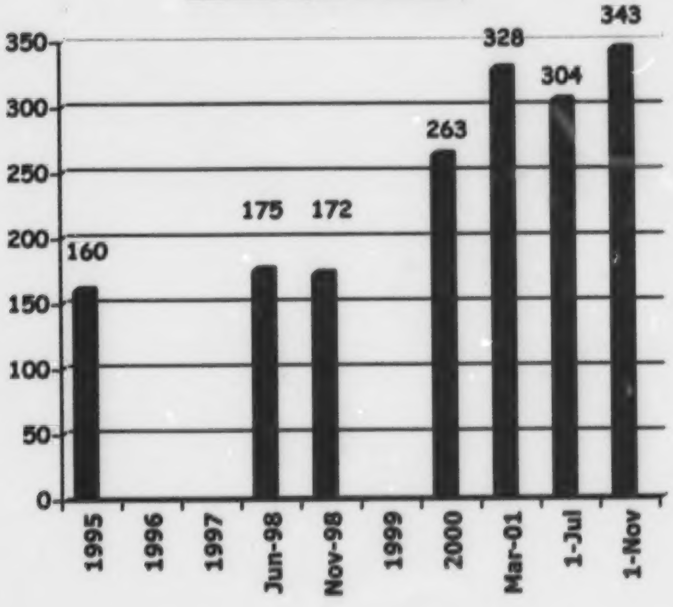
Of these places, emergency shelters and hostels are among the most accessible and reliable sources of information to make comparisons about the size and scope of the crisis of homelessness over time. However, it must be remembered that the number of people resorting to emergency shelter on a given night is only a small portion of the total number of people who lack a place to call their own.

There are three emergency men's shelters in Hamilton which offer a total of 148 permanent beds. There are five emergency women's shelters that offer a total of 96 beds. Four of these shelters are Violence Against Women (VAW) Shelters, three of which also have a mandate to serve women who are homeless. The Wesley Centre Drop-In is open 24 hours and offers mats on the floor for people who need to sleep overnight. Notre Dame House has 20 beds for youth who are homeless. Out of the Cold is a volunteer run program that offers a meal and overnight accommodation on mats at area churches.

Emergency shelter use has more than doubled since 1995.

The snapshot of homelessness in Hamilton that emergency shelter usage gives us is alarming. Emergency shelter usage has more than doubled since 1995. In 1995, the number of people staying in emergency shelters on a given night was 160, and in November 1998, it was 172. On any given night in Hamilton in November 2001, there were 343 people staying in emergency shelters[1]. People are increasingly sleeping on mats or being placed in hotels and motels when shelter beds are full.

Chart 1: Number of People in Emergency Shelters on a Given Night in Hamilton



Source: SPRC 2001 Emergency Shelter Survey, Community Action Plan on Homelessness 2000.

Homelessness among Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal people comprise 2% of Hamilton's population, but make up an estimated 20% of people experiencing homelessness in our community[2]. Forty-eight percent of Aboriginal people in our community live in poverty, as compared to 21.9% for the former Region of Hamilton-Wentworth, putting them at greater risk of homelessness.

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[1] The methods for this research included a survey of emergency shelters in Hamilton, in which shelters were asked to provide the number of people staying overnight in their program, the number of beds available, the number of people who were turned away, the gender of clients, and number of Aboriginal clients on each of three nights: March 20, July 17, and November 20, 2001. These nights were selected because they were weeknights near the end of the month, when resources may be running short, and people were more likely to need emergency shelters. This is a similar method used in previous reports, and helps to make comparisons between data possible.

[2] *Homelessness Trail: Voice of the People (2001), page 11.*

In *The Homelessness Trail: The Voice of the People*, a recent survey by the Hamilton Executive Director's Aboriginal Coalition (HEDAC), researchers found that Aboriginal men were twice as likely as Aboriginal women to experience absolute homelessness, but Aboriginal women were more likely than Aboriginal men to be on the verge of homelessness. When those experiencing absolute homelessness were asked to identify the reason they were homeless, the most common answer was the inability to afford housing.

The shelters respond to the growing crisis.

Different shelters and hostels have adapted differently to the growing crisis. The Wesley Centre has seen a 179% increase in the number of people staying overnight since 1998. The Salvation Army and Mission Services have both nearly doubled the number of people staying overnight since 1998. Some shelters, primarily the men's, have been able to temporarily meet the growing demand by providing mats on the floor and additional beds. The Salvation Army Booth Centre, for example, has expanded into space previously used by the Salvation Army Thrift Store, when it vacated the premises last Fall. The Booth Centre currently uses this space to provide up to 20 mats on a nightly basis.

Out of the Cold is now providing overnight shelter.

Out of the Cold, a volunteer driven shelter program for people experiencing homelessness has seen tremendous growth in the last few years. Originally an evening meal program, the program has now expanded to offer emergency overnight shelter five nights per week from November to March. Demand for this program continues to rise, and Out of the Cold reports that between 15 and 30 people stay overnight each night. Out of the Cold recently purchased an additional 90 mats to accommodate the increased demand.

Chart 2: Emergency Shelter Usage - Comparison 1995, 1998, 2000, 2001
Number of People Staying Overnight on a Given Night in Emergency Shelters/Beds Available

Name of Agency	1995[3]	November 1998	March 2000	March 2001	July 2001	November 2001	% Increase, 1998 -2001
Wesley Centre Drop-In	-	24	50	60	62	67[1]	179%
Salvation Army	-	46	63	78	63	91[4]	98%
Mission Services	-	25	42	40	40	45	80%
Martha House	-	28	16	29	27	27	-3%
Native Women's Centre	-	5	9	12	12	13	160%
Mary's Place	-	9	8	9	9	9	0%
Interval House	-	9	11	22	20	13	44%
Good Shepherd Men's Centre	-	19	17	15	27	20	5%
Inasmuch House	-	14	28	30	24	27	93%
Notre Dame House	not open	not open	19	16	20	19	not applicable
Out of the Cold	not open	not open	not open	17	not open	12	not applicable
Totals	160	172	263	328	304	343	(1995-2001)= 114%
Permanent Beds Available	*157*	*222*	*245*	*270*	*264*	*264*	

Source: SPRC 2001 Emergency Shelter Survey

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[3] The Health of the Public 1995 report, from which this data is gathered, did not report information for individual shelters.

[4] Mats provided for people when beds were full, Wesley has no beds available, but does provide mats on the floor.

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The number of people being turned away from shelters is increasing.

Some shelters have not had the resources to expand to meet the growing demand. When these shelters are full, they must turn away requests for services. As Charts 3 and 4 demonstrate, women's shelters in particular are consistently full, and have had to turn away more than 20 requests for service on a given night.

As the data from both Charts 3 and 4 indicate, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of women and their children who have been turned away from emergency shelters since 1999. Staff from these emergency shelters report that the reasons for the increasing number of women and children seeking emergency shelter are due to increasing poverty and the lack of housing options.

One factor in this growth is the shortage of transitional housing for women leaving abusive relationships. Second Stage Housing provides 20 units of transitional housing to women and their children leaving abusive relationships. In 1999[5], Second Stage Housing received 156 referrals for these 20 units; in 2000, 211 referrals, and in 2001, 206 referrals. Of these referrals, only between 11-15% annually were placed in transitional housing.

The lack of transitional housing combined with the general lack of housing options for women leaving abusive relationships is making an already dangerous situation worse. Women are faced with difficult choices about whether to remain in emergency shelters longer, leave their communities (for housing options in other communities), or even to return to an abusive relationship.

Chart 3: Number of People Turned Away From Emergency Shelters on a Given Night 1998, 2000, 2001

Name of Agency	November 1998	March 2001	July 2001	November 2001
Wesley Centre Drop-In	0	0	0	0
Salvation Army	0	not available	not available	0
Mission Services	7	0	0	3
Martha House	4	6	3	4
Native Women's Centre	not available	4	6	9
Mary's Place	4	8	1	6
Interval House	not available	10	7	0
Good Shepherd Men's Centre	1	0	0	0
Inasmuch House	4	7	0	0
Notre Dame House	not open	0	4	17
Out of the Cold	not open	0	not open	0
Totals	**20**	**35**	**21**	**39**

Source: SPRC 2001 Emergency Shelter Survey

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[5] These statistics are gathered by fiscal year, thus the year 2000 includes referrals from April 1999 - March 2000.

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Source: SPRC 2001 Emergency Shelter Survey

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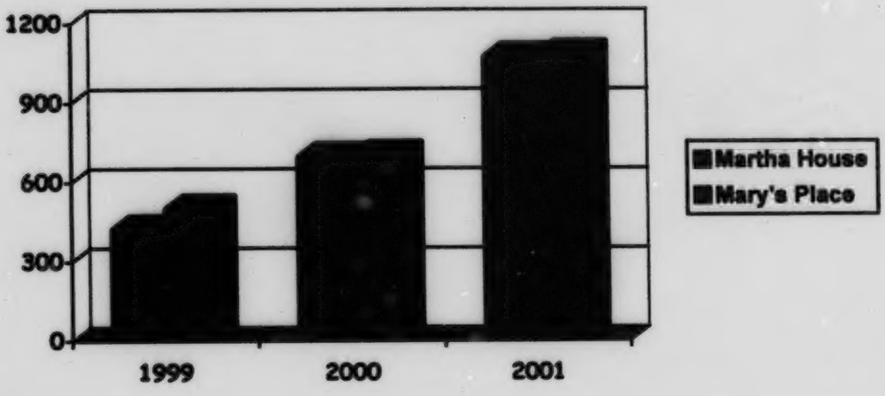
[5] These statistics are gathered by fiscal year, thus the year 2000 includes referrals from April 1999 - March 2000.

Chart 4 - # of Turnaways, Annually, Martha House and Mary's Place

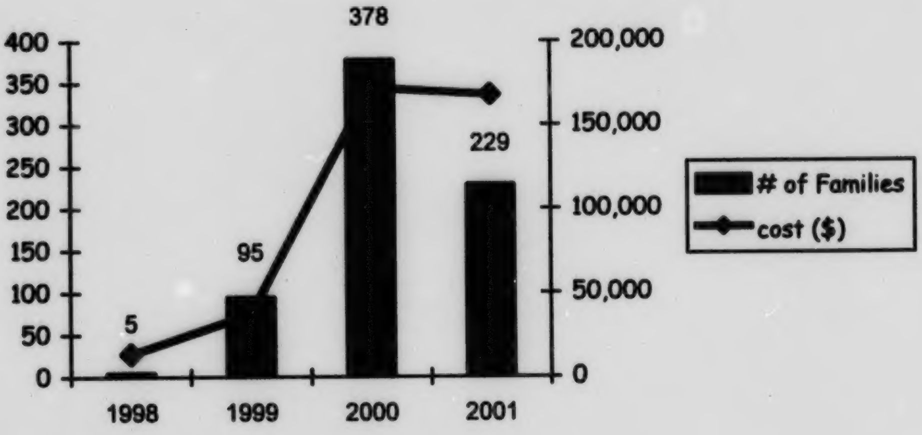


Source: Martha House, 2002

The number of families in emergency motels and hotels has risen dramatically.

When women and children are turned away from emergency shelters, or when families who are homeless are unable to find shelter, the City of Hamilton provides emergency hotel and motel accommodation. The number of families provided with emergency shelter by the City has shown a dramatic increase in the last three years.

Chart 5: Number of Families Placed in Motels/Hotels by Cost, by Year



Source: City of Hamilton, Social and Public Health Services.

The decrease in 2001 of the number of families reflects the City's efforts to find more cost-effective accommodation following the huge rise in the number of families placed in 2000. While the demand remained approximately the same from 2000 to 2001, the number of families placed in motels and hotels dropped because the City was able to find emergency housing in other places, for example, temporary housing in other communities. There is still a cost to the alternative arrangements, which explains why the cost did not drop in 2001. The City also reports that increased resources are being allocated to case management for these families.

H.O.M.E.S. program provides a permanent solution.

In October 1999, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care agreed to fund a community proposal to provide 100 units of housing and related support services for people with a history of mental illness and homelessness. Phase 2 of the funding allowed for 93 additional units to be created. Through this program, individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and have chronic mental health issues are relocated from the streets or temporary shelters to stable, secure, and affordable housing. The H.O.M.E.S. program is administered by Good Shepherd Non-Profit Homes, Inc. in partnership with other community-based organizations.

H.O.M.E.S. currently houses or provides supports to 143 people who have a history of homelessness and mental health issues. An additional 14 units are expected to be ready in the next 3 months. The remaining 39 units require new construction and are expected to be ready within the next two years. Most people in H.O.M.E.S. have used the emergency shelter system on a regular basis in the past. Because of limited spaces, the H.O.M.E.S. program is no longer accepting referrals.

Foodbanks continue to experience high demand.

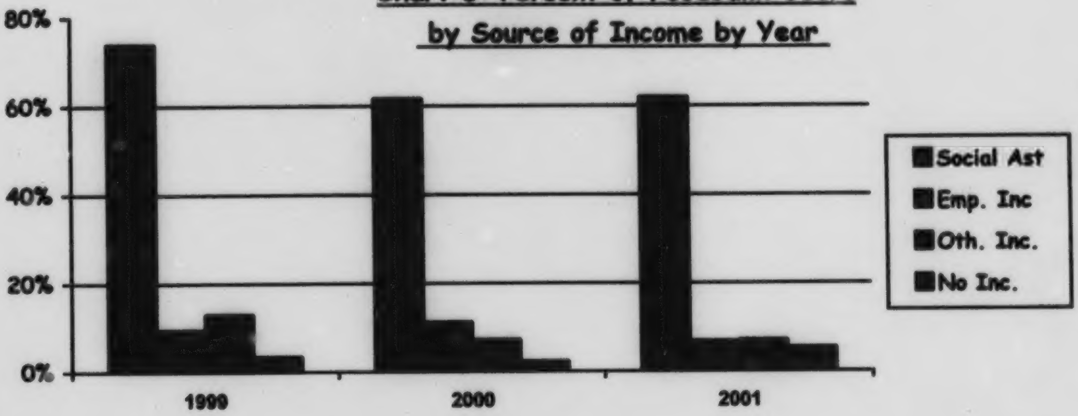
Foodbanks and meal programs provide an important link to people who are experiencing homelessness and those who are at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness. People who use food banks are nearly always spending more than 50% of their income to rent, or experiencing relative homelessness. For that reason, indicators of food bank usage are included in the homelessness section.

Every March, the Canadian Association of Food Banks collects information on foodbank and meal program usage. The data from Hamilton found that 5,300 households accessed foodbanks in March 2001 compared to 5,470 households in March 2000. This decrease of 3% can be attributed to the closure of one of the agencies providing services, which had served 1,187 people (or 9% of the total) in March 2000.

The 5,300 households who accessed food banks represent 13,240 people, of which 43% were children. Couples, single-parent, and two-parent families made up 58% of food bank users in March 2001. Singles comprise roughly one third of food bank users. Seniors and students made up 8% and 5%, respectively

The Hunger Count survey also examined the source of income of people accessing food banks. As shown in Chart 3, people on social assistance make up the vast majority of those needing to access foodbanks. Of particular concern, is the increase in people reporting "no income" from 2.3% in March of 2000 to 5.4% in March 2001. This percentage represents additional 161 households in our community who, if not already experiencing absolute homelessness, are likely to very soon.

Chart 6: Percent of Foodbank Users by Source of Income by Year

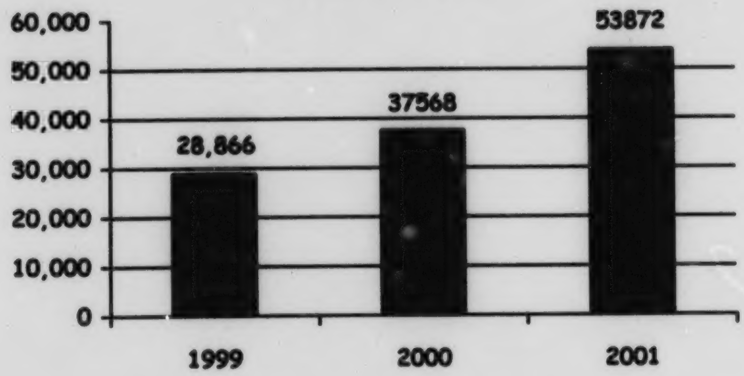


Hunger Count 2001

Meal programs see 30% increase in 2001.

While the number of people accessing foodbanks has remained at approximately the same level, the number of meals and snacks served to members of our community increased by 30% from March 2000 to March 2001. The number of meals and snacks served increased from 28,866 in March 1999 to 37,568 in March 2000 and 53,872 in March 2001.

Chart 7: Number of Meals/ Snacks Served In March of Each Year



Hunger Count 2001

This increase between 2000 and 2001 is primarily due to an increase in meals served at Good Shepherd Centre (an increase of approximately 3,000), at Mission Services (an increase of approximately 4,000), Out of the Cold (an increase of 1,000). Snacks served by the Beasley Area Nutrition 4 Kids breakfast program also increased by 3,000.

2.2 Poverty Indicators

Poverty and homelessness are deeply connected. People who are poor and at risk of homelessness are faced with impossible decisions how to decide between basic necessities such as shelter, food, and clothing. As housing costs rise, less and less is left for other necessities such as food and clothing, and their likelihood of missing a rent payment increases and with it the risk of eviction.

People living in poverty either work in low paying jobs, live on a fixed income such as Old Age Security or Disability or Ontario Works, or have no source of income at all. As the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* states:

> "For people living in deep poverty, the barrier to finding affordable housing has less to do with the cost of rental accommodation than it has to do with level of income. At some point, it does not matter how affordable housing is, if your income is too low, it will still be unaffordable[6]."

Poverty increased sharply in Hamilton between 1990 and 1995.

The poverty rate based on Statistics Canada's Low Income Cutoff for the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth increased from 17.4% in 1990 to 21.9% in 1995. The former City of Hamilton's poverty rate was substantially higher at 27.6% -- the second highest municipality in Ontario after Toronto.

While we are awaiting updated information about poverty in Hamilton from the 2001 Census, Statistics Canada does have national information from 1999[7], which showed that the gap between the two ends of the income scale widened slightly over the 1990's. In 1990, the top 20% of families received 42.2% of total market income. By 1999, their share was 44.4%. The net effect of taxes and transfers did counterbalance these shifts, and kept the after-tax income gap relatively stable throughout the 1990's.

Statistics Canada also reported that in 1999, nationally, there were some improvements in the depth of poverty for families, the number of families living with low-income, and the total number of people in low income. They noted a slight increase in the number of lone-parent families with low income. Improvements were primarily attributed to the strong economy and falling unemployment rates of the late 1990's.

As the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* states: "Like recent trends in demographics on homelessness, the face of poverty is diverse, and reflects systemic barriers to education, employment, fair wages and social assistance, and full and meaningful participation in community life.

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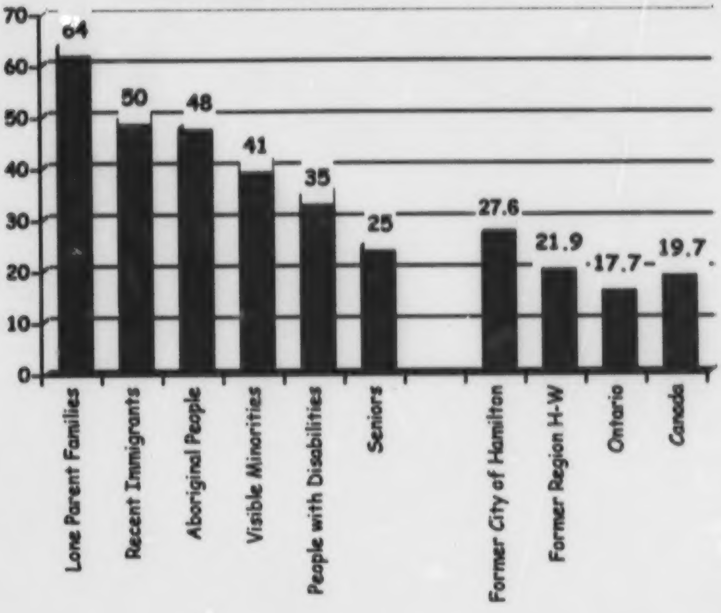
[6] Community Action Plan on Homelessness: p.4

[7] Statistics Canada, The Daily, November 6, 2001. *Family income 1999.*

It is especially harsh for women and children, newcomers to Canada, visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, and youth". The following chart gives the poverty rates of groups in our community who are disproportionately poor.

Chart 8: Poverty Rates (% blow LICO, 1996)



Source: Community Action Plan on Homelessness, 2000; Statistics Canada, 1996

There is a growing gap between owners and tenants.

In Hamilton, house owners' incomes increased 8% between 1990 and 1995, while tenants' incomes dropped by 4% over the same period. David Hulchanski, a Toronto scholar, found that the gap between Canadian owners' and renters' incomes increased by an average of about 1% a year between 1984 and 1999. Evidence from Toronto showed that the median net worth of owners increased by 43% to $248,000 between 1984 and 1999, while the median net worth of tenants decreased by 23% to $3,300 over the same time period[8]. Hulchanski argues that the impact of this growing gap will be fewer renters becoming homeowners and more and more renters having severe problems remaining housed leading to increased homelessness.

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[8] Hulchanski, D. (2001). *A tale of two Canada's: Homeowners getting richer, renters getting poorer.* Centre for Urban and Community Studies, Research Bulletin #2.

The number of people paying more than 50% of their income to housing is increasing.

People who pay more than 50% of their income to rent are experiencing relative homelessness. With such a high portion of their income going to cover housing costs, little is left over to pay for other basic necessities such as food and clothing. *Our Homes and Our Streets* included the following table, which detailed the number of households in Hamilton, owner and tenant, paying more than 50% of their income to housing.

Chart 9: Proportion of Income Spent on Housing, 1990 and 1995 Ontario and Hamilton-Wentworth

All households	>30% 1990		>30% 1995		>50% 1990		>50% 1995	
Ontario Tenants	432,915	33%	615,985	44%	194,920	15%	300,645	22%
Owners	403,785	18%	467,400	19%	135,310	6%	165,005	7%
Hamilton-Wentworth Tenants	22,025	35%	30,935	47%	10,065	16%	15,740	23%
Owners	19,160	18%	19,585	18%	5,940	6%	6,525	6%

Source: Statistics Canada, Standard Tabulations, 1991 and 1996 Census

The number of tenant households paying more than 50% of their income to rent increased from 16% (10,000 households) to 23% (15,460 households) in 1995. This increase was one of the largest in Canada. The SPRC estimates that this number has increased to at least 17,000 households in 2001 based on population growth alone.

Trends in Social Assistance

Number of caseloads shows decline.

The City of Hamilton reports that the caseload of Ontario Works has declined since 1999. In July 2001, there were 11,436 Hamilton households receiving Ontario Works (equivalent to 25,562 people). This is down from a monthly average of 13,405 households in the year 2000.

Little research is available to indicate the source of income for households who have left Ontario Works. The little research that is available was done in the late 1990's by the Ontario government, and indicated that about 60% of the people contacted for the survey left Ontario Works for employment. That leaves 40% of respondents who left Ontario Works for reasons other than employment.

It is notable that people were contacted by phone for the study, and while the total number of respondents was 2,100, the number of people who could not be contacted was over 3,000.

Anyone who had become homeless because they were cut off from Ontario Works could not have taken part in this follow-up survey.

An analysis by the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto (1998) reported the average hourly wage for someone who did find employment was $9.04/hour or $325/week. A single parent with one child would have to earn over $350/week just to reach the poverty line.

Lone-parent families make up majority of cases of Ontario Works.

The City of Hamilton reports that, since 1999, lone-parent families - not single individuals - are the majority of cases. In 2001, sole support parents comprised 65% of the total Ontario Works caseload - up from 60% in 2000.

Most people receiving Ontario Works are at risk of homelessness.

For people on Ontario Works, it is very difficult to spend less than 50% of your income on rent. In 1995, the Provincial Government cut social assistance benefits by 21.6%, and there has been no increase for cost of living since then. The shelter portion of Ontario Works is considerably below average rent levels in Hamilton, as the following table illustrates.

Chart 10: Shelter Allowances vs. Average Rents (2001)

2001		
Bedroom Type	**Average Rent in former City of Hamilton**	**Maximum Shelter Allowance**
Bachelor	$450	$325 (one person)
One - Bedroom	$574	$511 (two people)
Two-Bedroom	$696	$511 (two people)
Three-Bedroom	$848	$602 (four people)

Source: City of Hamilton, Social Public and Health Services, CMHC 2001 Rental Market Report

The City of Hamilton has calculated the average cost to purchase a "nutritious food basket", or food which meets the current nutrition recommendations for individuals or families. The following table compares the cost of shelter and food with the maximum benefits of Ontario Works. The amount in the final column represents what is left at the end of each month to buy clothing and other necessities.

Chart 11: Ontario Works Maximum Benefits, Rent Costs, Food Costs, and the Amount Left for Other Necessities, 2001

Family Type	Maximum OW Benefits[9]	Cost of Nutritious Food Basket per Month	Average Monthly Rents	Amount Left per Month for Other Necessities
Single Male	511	175	$450 (bachelor)	-$114
Single Mother with 7 year old daughter	957	218	$696 (2 BR)	$43
Family of four, male and female with boy, 12, and girl 7	1178	482	$848 (3 BR)	-$152

Source: Social and Health Issues, City of Hamilton, 2001; City of Hamilton, Social and Public Health Services; CMHC Rental Market Report 2001.

Many people receiving Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) are at risk of homelessness.

In March 2001, there were 3,139 ODSP recipients who were spending more than half of their income on rent, putting them at risk of homelessness. This represents approximately 27% of the caseload of ODSP[10].

The unemployment rate increased the last two years - but remains lower than Ontario average.

People who lose their job can find themselves suddenly vulnerable to homelessness. While the Hamilton CMA (which includes Burlington and Grimsby) consistently has the second lowest unemployment rate in the province (second to St. Catharines - Niagara), unemployment has risen since 1999. In July 2001, the monthly rate of unemployment was 6.6%, which represented 24,900 people unemployed in the Hamilton CMA, of these 11,524 were receiving Employment Insurance benefits. The following chart shows the unemployment rate in the Hamilton CMA compared to Ontario over time.

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[9] "Maximum benefits" have been calculated using a shelter allowance plus basic allowance without including OW fuel costs and assuming no flat-rate exemptions or deemed income.

[10] Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2001.

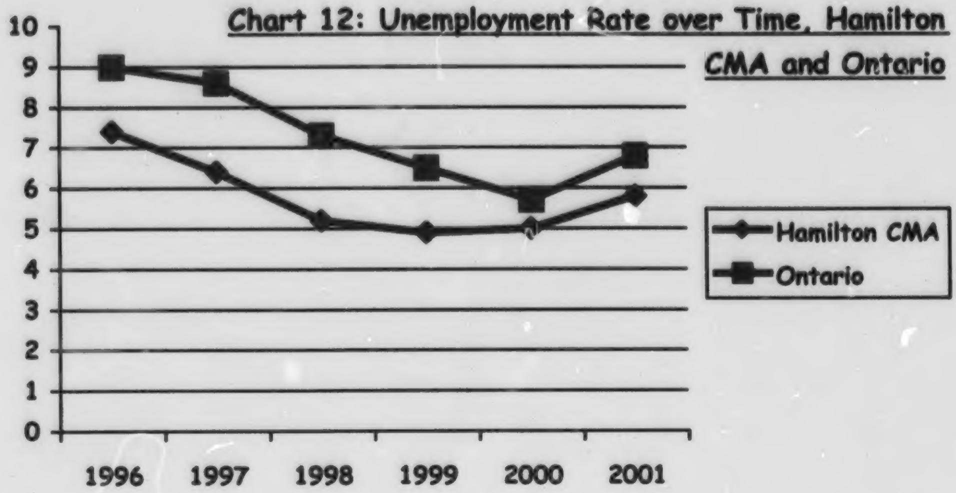


Chart 12: Unemployment Rate over Time, Hamilton CMA and Ontario

Source: HRDC 2001

Available research indicates that many of the jobs that are being created are part-time, and "non-standard". The *Poverty Profile of Hamilton* (SPRC, 1999) identified that "well paid, unionized jobs are decreasing, while part-time, low-paying jobs are being created in the retail and service sectors". Of particular concern is that the minimum wage has not been increased since 1995.

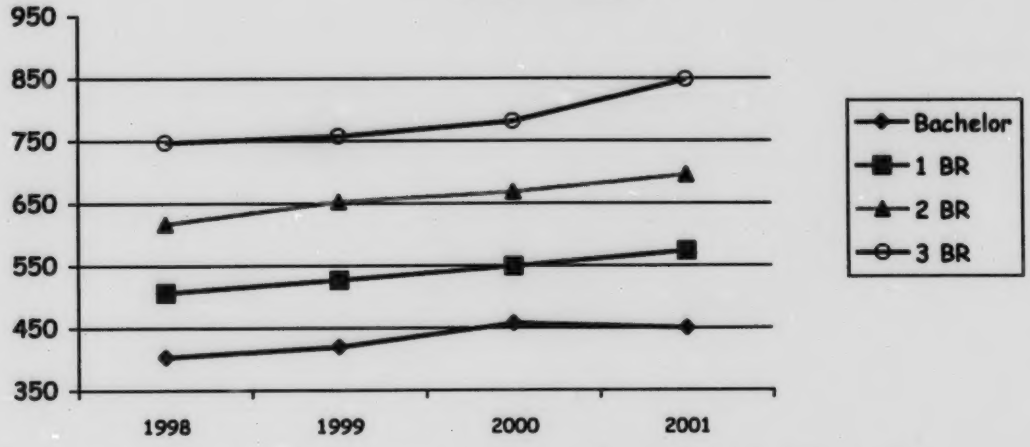
2.3 Housing Indicators

Long-term solutions to homelessness must include safe, secure, adequate, affordable and permanent housing options for all members of our community. In Hamilton, however, finding safe, secure, adequate, affordable, and permanent housing is becoming more and more difficult. Average rents are rising, while vacancy rates continue to decline. Eviction applications average more than 275 every month, and the number of people waiting for subsidized housing remains over 3000 households. Perhaps most striking is that virtually no new rental housing, affordable or otherwise, is being created in Hamilton (City of Hamilton, 2001). In fact, in their 2001 Annual Rental Market Survey, CMHC reported that the Hamilton CMA lost over 500 units of rental housing in 2001 due to conversion or demolition.

Average rents are rising.

Average rents continue to rise in Hamilton. The average apartment rent in the former City of Hamilton jumped 13% from 1998 to 2001 to $630, with rent increases ranging from 12% for bachelor apartments to 14% for units with 3+ bedrooms. Last year, rents decreased slightly (1.5%) for bachelor apartments, increased by 4.6% for one bedroom apartments, increased 4.2% for two bedroom units, and 8.6% for three bedroom units.

Chart 13: Average Rents, Former City of Hamilton, 1998 - 2001



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Annual Rental Market Report, 1999,2001

While there is considerable variation in both average rents and vacancy rates in different areas of Hamilton, as illustrated in the table below, rents have increased in all areas and vacancy rates have all decreased substantially.

Chart 14: Average Rents and Vacancy Rates, 1998,2001, by Area of Hamilton

Area	Average Rent 1998	Average Rent 2001	Vacancy Rate 1998	Vacancy Rate 2001
Downtown Core	$555	$629	4.8%	1.9%
Centre East	$521	$587	5.5%	0.8%
East End	$546	$641	4.1%	2.0%
Central/North	$506	$586	6.9%	4.1%
West End	$576	$673	1.9%	0.6%
Mountain	$586	$647	1.5%	0.7%
(former) City of Hamilton	**$557**	**$630**	**4.1%**	**1.6%**
Stoney Creek	$598	$635	1.6%	1.0%
Dundas	$672	$730	1.8%	0.4%
Burlington	$791	$864	0.3%	0.3%
Hamilton CMA	**$603**	**$677**	**3.2%**	**1.3%**

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Rental Market Report, 1999, 2001

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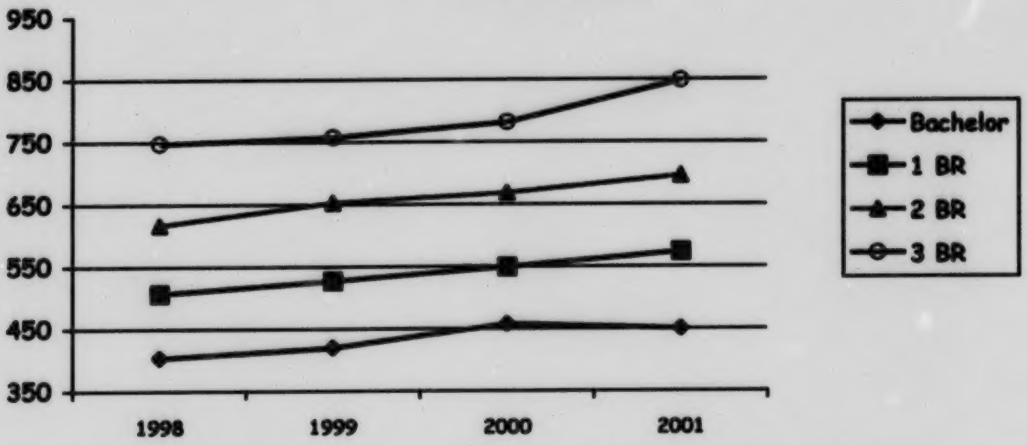

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Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Rental Market Report, 1999, 2001

Vacancy rates fall further below "healthy" levels.

The vacancy rate for the Hamilton CMA[11] is 1.3% and for the former City of Hamilton it is 1.6%. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) considers 3% to be "healthy", and notes that a vacancy rate lower than 3% may result in higher rent costs, less consumer choice and less maintenance. As Table 6 demonstrates, many areas of Hamilton have vacancy rates below 1% and are highly undersupplied. The only area in Hamilton to have a vacancy rate above 3% was Central Hamilton at 4.1%, driven primarily by a vacancy rate of 8.4% for bachelor apartments in that area. Hamilton has historically had a wide range of vacancy rates in different areas of the city, however, as the market has tightened in recent years, all areas have seen declining vacancies.

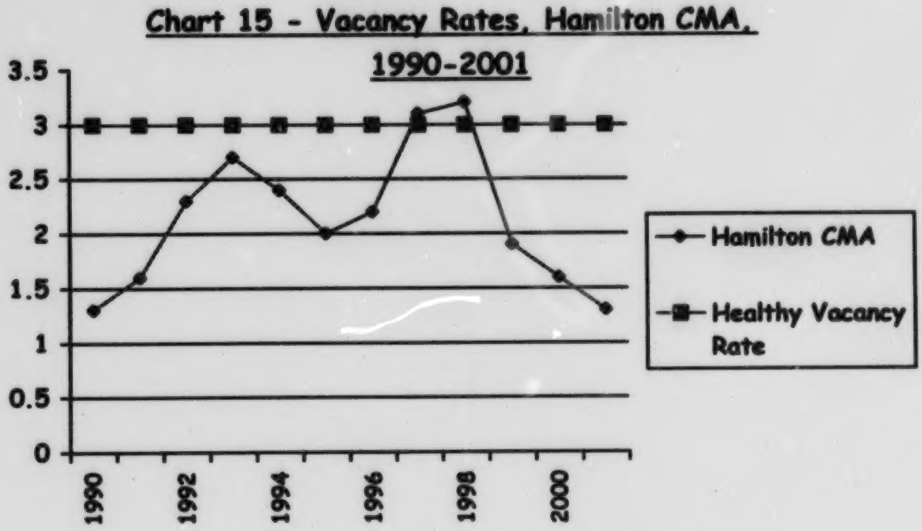

Chart 15 - Vacancy Rates, Hamilton CMA, 1990-2001

Source: Where's Home?; Where's Home? 2000 Update.

The supply of rental housing is shrinking.

There were approximately 57,200 rental units in the former City of Hamilton and 66,230 units in the Hamilton CMA in 1996. Since that time, some of those units have been lost to conversion or demolition (503 units lost to conversion in the year 2001 in the Hamilton CMA). CMHC reports that there were 0 rental starts in 2001, and only 15 in 2000. The lack of new rental housing is chronic in Hamilton, with only 53 starts between 1993 and 1999. CMHC estimates that there are 400 new tenant households in Hamilton annually, and the City of Hamilton, Planning and Development Department, estimates a need for 770 new rental units annually[12]

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[11] Hamilton CMA includes Burlington and Grimsby, while the Former City of Hamilton does not include Stoney Creek, Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, or Glanbrook.

[12] City of Hamilton, Planning and Development Department, Rental Housing Update 2001.

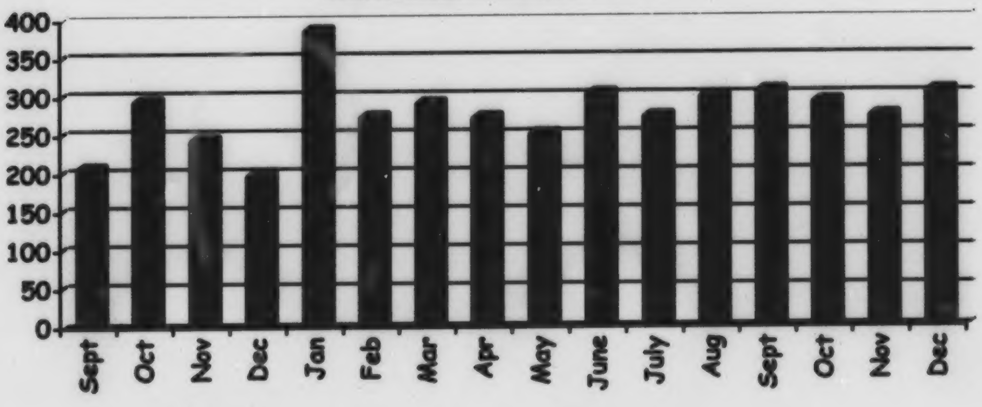
The Housing Help Centre, as a part of its annual *Vacant Rental Market Study*[13], keeps track of the monthly number of units advertised in the Hamilton Spectator. They reported that the number of units listed fell to an all-time low of 413 in April 2000. This is down from a high of 913 units listed in April 1993.

As was reported in *Our Homes and Our Streets*, there is little information to allow us to assess the quality of the existing rental housing stock. Census data from 1996, which did not separate rental and ownership housing, indicated that 8% of all private dwellings required major repairs (a 16% increase from 1991) and 27% of all private dwellings required minor repairs (an increase of 23% from 1991). Major repairs are defined as dwellings with defective plumbing or electrical wiring and/or dwellings requiring structural repairs to walls, ceilings and floors.

Applications for evictions average more than 275 per month.

People who are evicted from their homes face a housing crisis. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to know how many evictions are actually happening in our community. The Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal (ORHT) does record the number of applications for evictions weekly, however they do not keep track of how many of these applications actually result in evictions. We do know that 85% of applications to the ORHT were for rent arrears. The following chart gives the number of applications to the ORHT by month[14].

Chart 16: Number of Eviction Applications:
Sept 2000 - Dec 2001



Source: Hamilton Early Intervention Project.

While we do not know for certain why there was a spike in applications in January, there are several plausible explanations. The ORHT did not accept applications over the last two weeks of December - so it is possible that the increase results from the accumulated applications that could not be filed during that time.

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[13] Housing Help Centre, 2000. *Vacant Rental Market Study, Eleven Year Summary Data 1990-2000.*

[14] The OHRT keeps weekly statistics. These monthly statistics are approximations based on those weekly statistics.

However, the increase in applications is most apparent in the last week of January, not the first week, which suggests an alternative explanation - that spending during the holiday season leaves some members of our community unable to pay the rent - and vulnerable to eviction.

The Early Intervention Project is currently working on an analysis of eviction applications in Hamilton, and their report will be available in the summer of 2002.

The wait continues for affordable housing.

There are currently 14,200 not-for-profit housing units that are funded by the City of Hamilton. These include 6,100 units owned by the Hamilton Housing Corporation, and 8,100 owned and managed by the 38 non-profit housing provider members of the Community Housing Access Network (CHAN). As of December 1, 2001, the City of Hamilton took over responsibility from the Province for administration of these housing units. There are also approximately 5,000 units of Federally funded not-for-profit housing.

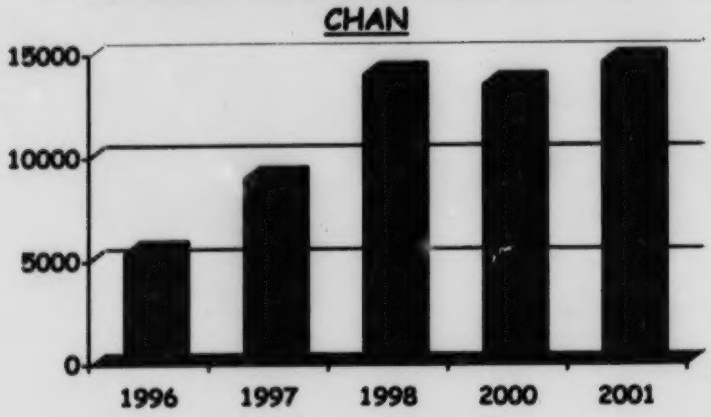
In 2001, there was a monthly average of 3,304 households on the CHAN waiting list for subsidized housing. This does not include the 322 households who were removed monthly from the list because they could not be contacted by mail or phone. An average of 104 households per month was successfully housed.

Average waits vary depending on the type of housing: for shared accommodation the wait could be a number of months, for a one-bedroom apartment in most areas of the city, the wait is over two years. Townhouses and single family homes have three-year waits on average. For some areas of the city, the wait can be four or five years.

In spite of the great demand for social housing, the Federal and Provincial governments have downloaded this responsibility to the municipalities, and since 1995 there have been no new funds allocated to social housing.

CHAN has reported that the annual number of people coming to the CHAN office (walk-ins) seeking help is a useful indicator of the need in the community because each one of them was either a new inquiry or return visits by applicants getting increasingly desperate for social housing.

Chart 17: Annual Number of Walk-Ins, CHAN



Source: CHAN 2002: Where's Home?

Again, this table reiterates the change that has taken place in our community since 1998. With just over 5,000 walk-ins in 1996, and over 8,000 in 1997, the number seems remarkably consistent since then. Approximately 14,000 people - nearly three times the level five years ago - are now either inquiring about, or getting increasingly desperate for social housing.

2.4 Key Findings from Trends in Homelessness

- The crisis of homelessness in Hamilton has escalated dramatically since 1998. The number of people staying in emergency shelters on a given night has increased from 172 in 1998 to 343 in November 2001.

- Women's shelters, in particular, are having to turn people away on a nightly basis; this requires immediate attention.

- Temporary emergency measures for families such as motel and hotel accommodation have skyrocketed since 1998.

- With the increasing poverty in our community, more and more people with low incomes are forced to make difficult choices about how to make ends meet every month.

- Social assistance rates, particularly for Ontario Works benefits, are extremely inadequate and leaving people at risk of homelessness. The shelter portion of the allowance falls seriously short of average rents, while the costs for basic necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing exceed the maximum benefit levels.

- Long term solutions, like the H.O.M.E.S. program, are successful, and should be expanded.

- The housing market in Hamilton has changed drastically since 1998. Average rents have increased 13% since 1998 and vacancy rates in the CMA have plunged from 3.2% to 1.3%.

- The private rental market is not producing new units in spite of the increased demands and an estimated need of 770 new units annually.
- With long waiting lists and waits of up to 5 years, there is an urgent need for social housing in this community.

Summary

The last time that these indicators were compiled was in 1999 in the report *Our Homes and Our Streets*. While that report documented the rising poverty in our community, it did not find that indicators of homelessness had increased dramatically since 1995. It also reported that while very little rental housing was being built, "Hamilton rents are some of the most affordable in the province" (SPRC, 1999: 51). It also found that the rental housing market vacancy rates above the "healthy" levels as prescribed by CMHC.

The last four years, and the data included in this report, tell a very different story. With double the number of people accessing emergency shelters on a given night, vacancy rates plunging, and average rents increasing, the crisis of homelessness has taken a dramatic turn for the worse in Hamilton.

The drastic changes of the last few years have certainly not gone unnoticed by the many agencies, organizations, and individuals who are working to alleviate the crisis of homelessness in this community. It is because of their tireless work, and the commitment of new funding by governments, that this crisis is not even bleaker. And it is only through continued cooperative efforts that there can be some relief for people experiencing this crisis first hand. The next section of this report will examine this community's response to the growing crisis of homelessness.

3.0 REPORT CARD ON HOMELESSNESS

3.1 Report Card Methodology

The methodology for gathering information for this report card utilized a qualitative model in the form of a survey and key informant interviews. The survey was developed to gather information about the work that community organizations in Hamilton have been doing in the past year that has contributed to progress on *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* recommendations.

This survey was sent out by mail in January to 66 community agencies. 55 out of 66 community agencies responded to in the survey. In some cases, we gathered further information through follow-up phone interviews. In total, we were in contact with, and gathered information from approximately over 60 agencies.

The results of the survey provides information about positive actions that have been taken by community organizations in the past year that have contributed to progress on the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness.*

In this report card, we gauge progress on each recommendation in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*, and identify those tasks recommended in the Plan on which little or no action has been taken.

The degree of progress that has been made on each recommendation in the past year was determined by comparing the positive actions that have been taken with those parts of each recommendation that have not been addressed.

Following a traffic light analogy, recommendations were assigned either one of three colours: green, yellow, or red, depending on the degree of progress on that recommendation. In the following section, the recommendation number will be highlighted in one of the following colours, determined by the progress made on that particular recommendation.

[illegible]

Action has been taken to address some of the tasks in this recommendation. (yellow)

[illegible]

3.2 Summary Of Progress By Recommendation

PRIORITY AREA RECOMMENDATION #1 (yellow) SHELTERS

The current shelter system is overextended and under-funded. There is a need for adequate funding of shelters as they are often the frontline for people who are experiencing homelessness. Resources are required to ensure more quality, effective staffing to meet the growing demand. That is to say, if more resources are made available so as to ensure that an adequate number of qualified staff are always on hand to provide all needed services, and that those staff are provided with comprehensive training to help them deal with diverse communities and complex needs, then a more comprehensive service model will result.

The community should also support all urgent maintenance, modifications, expansion, and staffing requirements at emergency shelters so as to ensure that emergency shelter is available for all individuals and families who require it. In no particular order, the following actions are also recommended.

Recommendation #1 involves many tasks. The following actions have been taken in the community which have contributed to progress on this recommendation:

Emergency shelters have undergone major repairs.

The capacity of emergency shelters has expanded.

The number of qualified emergency shelter staff has increased.

Improvements have been made to emergency shelter services for families.

Plans have been developed to assist seniors who are at-risk of homelessness to avoid a housing crisis.

Improvements have been made to services that assist people with limited incomes to find and maintain housing that is safe and affordable.

The following is a list of tasks which have either been partly addressed, or which have not been addressed:

Providing cultural sensitivity and anti-racism training for emergency shelter staff.

Gathering better statistics on the use of emergency shelters by aboriginal people.

Establishing a "Settlement House" for immigrants and refugees who are newcomers to our community.

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Establishing a "Settlement House" for immigrants and refugees who are newcomers to our community.

Involving people who have experienced homelessness in the assessment of emergency shelter needs.

Involving people who have experienced homelessness on committees dealing with homelessness issues.

Establishing a homelessness help group, based on a peer support model, for people experiencing homelessness.

Ensuring the accessibility of drop-ins.

Since only some of the tasks in Recommendation #1 have been addressed in the past year, this recommendation receives a yellow light.

PRIORITY AREA RECOMMENDATION #2 (green) OUTREACH

Current outreach programs have been very effective at meeting the needs of people who are homeless and/or have mental health issues and/or are vulnerable to losing their housing. However, they are overwhelmed and are unable to meet the needs of many people without having a comprehensive 24-hour program of support, and an expanded and more coordinated structure. We recommend that the Community, the Region, and the Province work to expand our local outreach team to effectively meet the needs of people who have a mental health and/or addiction issues, have developmental or physical challenges and/or are struggling with issues of homelessness.

The following actions have been taken in the community which have contributed to progress on this recommendation.

Outreach services for people coping with mental health issues, addictions, developmental or physical challenges, and people experiencing homelessness have been expanded.

24-hour outreach services have been established for people coping with mental health problems, addictions, developmental or physical challenges, and people experiencing homelessness.

The Coordination of existing outreach services has been improved.

These are all of the tasks in recommendation #2. Recommendation #2 thus receives a green light.

Involving people who have experienced homelessness in the assessment of emergency shelter needs.

Involving people who have experienced homelessness on committees dealing with homelessness issues.

Establishing a homelessness help group, based on a peer support model, for people experiencing homelessness.

Ensuring the accessibility of drop-ins.

Since only some of the tasks in Recommendation #1 have been addressed in the past year, this recommendation receives a yellow light.

[redacted]

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The Coordination of existing outreach services has been improved.

These are all of the tasks in recommendation #2. Recommendation #2 thus receives a green light.

[redacted]

We recommend that institutions and community members should develop a proactive, standardized discharge process based on the needs of the individual, to ensure they work more effectively.

This is the only task in recommendation #3, and has not been addressed. Recommendation #3, therefore, receives a red light.

[redacted]

Current drop-ins were designed to meet the needs of single men, who are thought to have traditionally made up the largest proportion of people who are homeless. This means that many other groups of people feel uncomfortable in those contexts. We recommend that the Province and Region work to develop drop-ins to meet the needs of everyone, including those individuals who have traditionally experienced barriers in attempting to access services. Some of these groups include: immigrants and refugees, Aboriginal persons, visible minorities, youth, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, women, and children. It is vitally important that all drop-ins are seen as welcoming environments to all members of our community.

Very little has been done in the past year to ensure the accessibility of emergency drop-ins for people who have traditionally faced barriers to accessing these services. Part of the reason for this may be because "accessibility" is a broad term, which encompasses a broad range of diverse needs experienced by different groups of people. To both make and evaluate progress on this recommendation, it will be necessary to refine the definition of "accessibility" and break this recommendation down into a more specific set of tasks.

[redacted]

More women and children are relying on meal programs for their food. Traditionally these programs were designed for men, and other groups may feel uncomfortable in these environments. We recommend that the community work to make meal programs more accessible for everyone by talking to affected groups and including them in the process of change.

Very little has been done in the past year to ensure the accessibility of meal programs for people who have traditionally faced barriers to accessing these services. Part of the reason for this may be because "accessibility" is a broad term, which encompasses a broad range of diverse needs experienced by different groups of people. To both make and evaluate progress on this recommendation, it will be necessary to refine the definition of "accessibility" and break this recommendation down into a more specific set of tasks.

RECOMMENDATION #6 (yellow)

There is increasing systemic pressure from institutions to have people placed back in the community as quickly as possible. This often makes it difficult to match people with the appropriate community resources. A number of crisis/transition beds would provide the time necessary to connect people with the appropriate community resources. We recommend the establishment of crisis/transitional beds for people who are recently discharged from hospital or from a correctional facility so that community organizations can match them with the supports and resources they need to live in the community.

The Bridge Program received some SCPI funding last Winter to provide transitional beds for people who had been recently discharged from prison. Through the increase in transition beds for people recently discharged from prison was only temporary, SCPI funding has been provided to establish an additional eight transition beds.

[redacted]

The stress of having to move out of a men's shelter every seven days makes it difficult to provide men with the support and stability necessary to get off the streets. We recommend that the "seven day rule" be changed so that men could remain in a shelter for the length of time deemed necessary to obtain more secure and appropriate housing.

The length of time individuals can stay at an emergency shelter has increased from seven days to six weeks.

[redacted]

Each organization in the city has their own schedule for when people can access their meal program or foodbank, making it difficult for people to remember all the schedules. We recommend that the Regional Advisory Committee on Food and Shelter work with providers of meal programs and food banks to develop a more coordinated and simplified schedule of days and times when people can access food programs in the Region.

A listing of meal programs and food banks is provided in Hamilton' Food Access Guide, prepared jointly by the City of Hamilton and the North Hamilton Community Health Centre.

[redacted]

People who are homeless often experience increased health problems as a result of poor nutrition, exposure to harsh temperatures, inadequate sleep, and having to continually walk the streets.

These people also find it difficult to access services because there are long waiting lists and they often do not have calendars or watches to attend an appointment that is arranged for some future date. We recommend that the Province increase access to dental care and other needed health services for people who are homeless.

Health care services for people experiencing homelessness have been improved.

A community-based committee has been established to identify gaps in health care services for people experiencing homelessness.

[redacted]

Many people who are homeless have multiple problems that they are trying to address. They are also often fearful of approaching traditional health care services because of negative past experiences and/or embarrassment. We recommend that the Ministry of Health fund an integrated health care outreach team which can enhance current outreach teams in the region and address the health issues of people who are homeless.

Funding has been provided to improve health care outreach services for people experiencing homelessness.

[redacted]

People who are homeless are vulnerable to being robbed and do not have secure places to keep their belongings. As a result, many lack identification which makes it difficult to secure health care or social assistance. We recommend that the Federal government provide money to Regional Municipalities for the purpose of helping people secure adequate identification.

I.D. clinics have been expanded to assist people experiencing homelessness to secure personal identification.

RECOMMENDATION # 12 (yellow)

To ensure that people who are homeless are able to have a continuity of support and access to programs, we recommend that the Region and Province immediately establish stable funding for existing or proposed 24-hour drop-ins.

Temporary funding has been provided to emergency drop-ins so that they can operate on a 24-hour basis. It is also recommended, however, that our community should work to ensure that 24 hour drop-ins receive funding on an on-going basis.

PRIORITY AREA RECOMMENDATION #13 (yellow) **HOUSING**

Affordable, adequate and safe housing is a key component to solving the homelessness crisis; including the preservation and development of both existing social housing stock and safe, secure, affordable, adequate, accessible, permanent rental housing stock.

We recommend that SHAC work to ensure that the 700 scattered public housing units are not sold-off and that the provincial and federal governments renew their commitment to developing non-profit housing for low-income people. We also recommend that successful creative models of housing, as well as innovative ways to utilize existing non-profit housing stock, be explored for our community.

We also strongly recommend that the Provincial and Federal governments renew their commitment to developing non-profit housing for people who are homeless, families with low incomes, Aboriginal persons, youth, seniors, women, and singles in need of permanent affordable housing.

The downloading of social housing from the Province to the City did not result in the sale of public housing units.

City Staff and housing advocates in Hamilton have been active in lobbying senior levels of government on issues related to non-profit housing. The Provincial and Federal governments have not, however, renewed their commitment to developing non-profit housing. Different models for increasing Hamilton's stock of safe, adequate, affordable housing are being examined.

More work needs to be done to inform rooming house tenants about their rights.

RECOMMENDATION # 14 (green)

The Region of Hamilton-Wentworth should financially support services that reach out to those who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of losing their housing. Specialized assistance for those who face barriers in finding adequate housing (through support during the housing) search process and by advocating on behalf of people who at risk of losing their housing - is a necessity for many in the community so that they may obtain and maintain housing.

Improvements have been made to services that assist people with limited incomes to find and maintain housing that is safe and affordable.

More resources are being put toward advocating on behalf of people in danger of losing their housing.

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The downloading of social housing from the Province to the City did not result in the sale of public housing units.

City Staff and housing advocates in Hamilton have been active in lobbying senior levels of government on issues related to non-profit housing. The Provincial and Federal governments have not, however, renewed their commitment to developing non-profit housing. Different models for increasing Hamilton's stock of safe, adequate, affordable housing are being examined.

More work needs to be done to inform rooming house tenants about their rights.

RECOMMENDATION #[illegible] (green)

The Region of Hamilton-Wentworth should financially support services that reach out to those who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of losing their housing. Specialized assistance for those who face barriers in finding adequate housing (through support during the housing) search process and by advocating on behalf of people who at risk of losing their housing - is a necessity for many in the community so that they may obtain and maintain housing.

Improvements have been made to services that assist people with limited incomes to find and maintain housing that is safe and affordable.

More resources are being put toward advocating on behalf of people in danger of losing their housing.

RECOMMENDATION # 15 (yellow)

Waiting lists for safe, medium term housing for women who are leaving abusive situations are very long. We recommend that the Province reinstate and stabilize funding to transitional housing services so that this community can meet the medium term needs of women leaving abusive situations.

Temporary funding has been provided for transitional housing services for women survivors of abuse. It is also recommended, however, that our community should work to ensure that transitional housing for women survivors of abuse receive funding on an on-going basis.

RECOMMENDATION #16

Procedures to establish bank accounts for people who have limited identification should be reviewed, along with Ontario Works (OW) procedures that require the establishment of a bank account in order to continue receiving benefit.

We were not able to gather sufficient information to evaluate progress on this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION # 17 (yellow)

Our research process found that there are some people whose desperate need for affordable housing may not be recognized by the modified chronological system that the Community Housing Access Network uses to create their waiting list. We recommend that the Community Housing Access Network (CHAN) work with the province to explore how people are affected by the current waiting list model and the ways that it might be adapted to meet people's needs more effectively.

A group of representatives from community organizations is currently working on making changes to the CHAN waiting list model. Progress on this recommendation is behind schedule according to the time lines laid out in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness.*

RECOMMENDATION # 18 (yellow)

It remains difficult for people who are transient, illiterate or for whom English is not a language they are comfortable communicating in to remain on the social housing waiting list. We recommend that the Community Housing Access Network (CHAN) work with the Province to explore ways to ensure that people with literacy or language difficulties remain on the list despite problems in responding to written or oral requests for information.

A group of representatives from community organizations is currently working on making changes to the CHAN waiting list model. Progress on this recommendation is behind schedule according to the time lines laid out in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness.*

RECOMMENDATION # 19 (yellow)

It is clear from our research that many youth who are living with psychiatric or developmental problems or who are homeless or who are trying to leave abusive family situations are not having their needs met by the mainstream school system. Waiting lists for alternative schools are quite long. We recommend that the Ministry of Education increase the resources committed to providing alternative schools for youth that cannot manage within the mainstream school system.

Some alternative educational opportunities for street-involved youth have been established. We consider this progress limited, however, since no progress has been made in developing alternative educational opportunities within the public education system to accommodate those youth who might otherwise drop out, or be kicked out, of school.

RECOMMENDATION # 20 (yellow)

Upon release from prison many people are vulnerable to becoming homeless because they have lost their accommodation, their belongings and have been cut off ODSP. We recommend that ODSP be reworked so those people can return to their previous involvement with the program even after incarceration. That is, benefits should be automatically re-instated after incarceration.

In response to a recent Divisional Court ruling, *Director of ODSP v. Eluck,* the Ontario Disability Support Program Branch has temporarily revised its policy, and will suspend rather than cancel income support for some individuals who are incarcerated, reinstating benefits when they are discharged. This policy will only be applied in those cases where a person was receiving income support prior to 1998 when the ODSP legislation was passed into law.

This temporary policy change will not provide the income support necessary for someone to continue to pay his or her rent while incarcerated.

RECOMMENDATION # 21 (yellow)

Recently the Housing Development Group completed a report, entitled "Supported Housing for People with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness: A Plan for Hamilton-Wentworth", with recommendations as to how the Region could meet the supportive housing needs of people with mental health issues. We recommend that the Region ensure the recommendations of the Housing Development Group are implemented to provide an effective system of support.

The member organizations of the Supported Housing Coordination Network (previously the Housing Development Group) have been working to implement the recommendations of this report.

[redacted]

There is some concern over the variation in quality of Second Level Lodging Homes. Some of this might be addressed by providing increased training and support to staff within these homes. We recommend that the Region work with support agencies to identify training programs and support needs for staff in Second Level Lodging Homes.

While some work is being done in this area, the training of staff of second-level lodging homes has not improved.

[redacted]

In addition to training staff in Second Level Lodging Homes, we recommend that the Second Level Lodging Home licensing body look into the possibility of tying mandatory staff training to licensing.

A new second level lodging homes by-law has been approved by City Council. However, no regulations regarding staff training were included in this by-law.

[redacted]

The Region should move to lower the property tax rate for multi-residential buildings closer to that of residential buildings in order to promote rental housing affordability.

Though property tax rates for new construction of multi-residential buildings have been lowered, this policy change does not affect the property tax rates for existing multi-residential buildings.

RECOMMENDATION # 25 (yellow)

In order to address the concern that not all social service agency staff are trained to meet the multiple and complex needs of people who are homeless or at risk of losing their housing, we recommend that the Region develop a joint staff training program to ensure all health and social service agency staff and students throughout the community are educated about homelessness, and about the diverse and complex needs of those families who are experiencing homelessness.

Some training programs for health and social service students have been developed to educate them about the challenges facing people who experience homelessness.

[redacted]

Our research clearly shows that youth are vulnerable to becoming homeless. The current policies regarding whether youth can access social assistance programs results in some youth having to survive without any income whatsoever. We recommend that the Province ensure

that 16 and 17 year olds can receive social assistance without having to meet the requirement of school attendance. This is especially important for youth that are unable to access school as a result of missing the enrolment deadline or because of a documented inability to manage within the school system.

This recommendation has not been addressed.

RECOMMENDATION # 27 (yellow)

The Region should make the Community Start-Up Benefit more widely and consistently known.

Limited action has been taken to provide people on social assistance with information about the Community Start-Up Benefit.

RECOMMENDATION # 28 (yellow)

Planning should be undertaken by the Region and community groups to provide for the housing needs of youth, seniors and persons with addictions.

Some plans have been developed to provide for the needs of seniors and youth experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness. This recommendation will need further definition before we can determine the degree of progress being made.

PRIORITY AREA RECOMMENDATION #29 (yellow) REINSTATEMENT OF BENEFITS

Poverty remains one of the single most important factors leading to homelessness. Current social assistance levels result in people being extremely vulnerable to losing their housing or being unable to secure adequate housing. We recommend a reinstatement of the 21.6 % that was cut from social assistance rates in 1995. Additionally, that percentage should also reflect inflation rates since 1995. Thus social assistance rates should be reinstated by 27.5%

We also recommend the creation of a formula which would base the shelter portion of social assistance rates on the average rent of a vacant rental market unit (appropriate to family size) in the Region.

Further, although ODSP recipients did not experience the 21.6% cutback in assistance, they have not received increases since 1995 and so should receive a 5.9% increase for inflation as well as a re-instatement of the many discretionary benefits that have been removed from ODSP.

A committee of community members came together as a result of the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* process, called the Homelessness Initiative Campaign for Adequate Welfare (HICFAW). They have been working, without resources, on this recommendation, but as yet have been unsuccessful.

PRIORITY AREA RECOMMENDATION #30 (Red) INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND BENEFITS

Social assistance procedures should be changed to allow a resident who is temporarily hospitalized, or incarcerated, to continue to pay their rent and hold their apartment until discharge (some limits will apply).

A forum was held to assist community members to better understand the current OW and ODSP policies on receiving assistance while hospitalized or incarcerated. However these policies have not been changed. **See RECOMMENDATION #20.**

PRIORITY AREA RECOMMENDATION #31 (yellow) FOOD SECURITY

It is often through the services provided by foodbanks and meal programs that people living on inadequate incomes are able to maintain their housing. Therefore, all levels of government should commit to ensuring local food security and the community should explore creative ways to address the root causes of hunger, since those programs are not a sustainable or adequate solution to the problem of hunger in our community.

An assessment of emergency food program resources is underway.

A client survey and an agency survey have been developed and sent to local food banks to identify trends in emergency program use.

It is also recommended in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* that the community look at effective ways to encourage collective kitchens, community gardens, and other sustainable models of food security. This part of the recommendation has not been addressed.

RECOMMENDATION # 32 (green)

People who are receiving social assistance often find it difficult to secure adequate housing because they are unable to pay first and last month's rent. Other individuals and families find themselves in a financial crisis, which results in them not being able to pay one or two month's rent. This leaves them vulnerable to eviction. We recommend that the Region assist in funding an emergency loan program on an ongoing basis to help provide emergency financial resources for tenants who are at risk of becoming homeless.

The Housing Emergency Loan Program (H.E.L.P.) has received SCPI funding to expand its services.

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The Housing Emergency Loan Program (H.E.L.P.) has received SCPI funding to expand its services.

[illegible]

Tenants continue to be confused about the new *Tenant Protection Act*. Many people are unsure of their rights and responsibilities. Some tenants also state that they still face discrimination in the rental housing market. We recommend that the Region and Province provide resources to tenant organizations, and other housing/legal agencies, to provide education for tenants. Tenant organizations have extensive experience in these areas and provide an important service to the community because they are led by tenants themselves.

SCPI Funding has been provided to the Tenant Education Project.

RECOMMENDATION # 34 (yellow)

Our research suggests that there are some creative, effective, supportive and transitional housing programs in our community and other communities in Canada, the United States, and other countries. Having descriptions of these projects may help us implement these effective programs more broadly. We recommend that a process of gathering descriptions of effective supportive and transitional housing programs begin and those models used to guide the development of a varied continuum of supportive housing.

Research has been completed on supportive housing programs for people coping with mental health issues and developmental or physical challenges.

Transitional housing and some supportive housing programs have improved.

RECOMMENDATION # 35 (green)

Community organizations should evaluate the eviction prevention program being run by the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA) in Toronto, and if it is seen to be effective in preventing evictions, adapt the program for Hamilton and approach the Region for funding this type of activity.

The Eviction Prevention Project has been established to assist those facing eviction to maintain their housing. Funding has been provided to evaluate this project.

[illegible]

The dramatic increase in the number of rental units that have been converted to condominiums since the introduction of the *Tenant Protection Act* may represent a threat to the current rental housing stock, but we need more information and time to fully assess what this increase means. We recommend that Solutions for Housing Action Committee (SHAC) continue to monitor the situation with respect to the rates of conversions of rental housing to condominiums so that we may fully understand its impact on our housing stock. SHAC should also support the Region in its efforts to maintain municipal authority to preserve rental housing.

The City of Hamilton has policies in place to minimize the loss of affordable rental housing through "condo conversions." However, little information has been provided to community organizations about the rate of condo conversions in Hamilton. This has hampered the ability of community organizations to independently monitor the rate of conversions and, if necessary, to lobby for policy changes on this issue.

RECOMMENDATION [illegible]

Some tenants remain in units they cannot afford until they are evicted because they cannot afford to move out of the unit. Other people stay in accommodation that is unsafe or inadequate for similar reasons. We recommend that the Region support the establishment of a moving program, which could help move tenants for an affordable (or free) cost.

A program has been established to assist low-income tenants, and people experiencing homelessness, to move or store their possessions.

RECOMMENDATION # 38 (yellow)

There are some people in the Region who find it difficult to manage their money and want support to ensure that their bills are paid on time. Without this support some people are vulnerable to becoming homeless. We recommend that the Province immediately re-establish the Voluntary Trusteeship Program so that people can have support to manage their money if they feel they require that help.

Mission Services, the Salvation Army and the Good Shepherd Centres have received SCPI funding to operate a collaborative trusteeship program. From the information gathered through the survey and follow-up phone interviews, it was unclear whether this program would be entirely voluntary.

PRIORITY AREA RECOMMENDATION #39 (green) HOMELESSNESS PROJECT COORDINATOR

[illegible] community's efforts [illegible] homelessness [illegible] resources and an adequate [illegible] this [illegible] made available [illegible] government [illegible] position [illegible] assisting community [illegible] organizations [illegible] implement these recommendations.

Staff resources have been made available to provide support to community organizations and the municipal government to assist in the implementation of *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* recommendations.

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PRIORITY AREA RECOMMENDATION #39 (green) HOMELESSNESS PROJECT COORDINATOR

It takes time and resources to coordinate a community's efforts to address homelessness. Without dedicated staff resources and an adequate budget, this work could not take place. Resources should be made available from all levels of government to fund the Homelessness Project Coordinator position, and to ensure that adequate staffing is made available to provide support to existing community based organizations and governments to help implement these recommendations.

Staff resources have been made available to provide support to community organizations and the municipal government to assist in the implementation of *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION #40 (yellow)

The current process of collecting statistics around evictions does not provide the community with much information about how the process is impacting tenants. We recommend that the Solutions for Housing Action Committee (SHAC) and the community legal clinics work with other agencies province-wide, the Housing Tribunal and the Province so that an adequate system of obtaining information around eviction rates and the situations that result in evictions can be established and shared with community groups.

Information around evictions in Hamilton and the situations that result when people are evicted from their homes is being collected. Available eviction statistics have been included in this report. However, no information on eviction rates in Hamilton is currently available.

RECOMMENDATION # 41 (green)

The Region should provide mechanisms for direct community involvement in municipal discussions about downloading of social housing and other housing matters.

A Community Consultation Committee on Social Housing has been formed, and has met periodically in the last year. This committee involves representatives from various community organizations in discussions with the City of Hamilton about the transfer of social housing from the Province to the City.

RECOMMENDATION # 42 (yellow)

Many people in our community hold stereotypes about people who are homeless which makes it difficult to meet the needs of this vulnerable group. We recommend that the Regional Advisory Committee on Food and Shelter and the Solutions for Housing Action Committee (SHAC) work together to develop public education campaigns that can increase public understanding of the issues facing people who are homeless. Financial resources from all levels of government as well as from community organizations will be necessary to do this outreach. Any public education campaign must involve people who are at risk of becoming homeless.

A series of community forums is currently underway to increase public understanding of the issues facing people experiencing homelessness and hunger-related issues.

While some work has been done to involving people who have experienced homelessness in educating the public about homelessness issues, more work could be done in this area.

RECOMMENDATION # 43 (green)

We recommend that when services are proposed, there should be a request for proposals so that the community can have input into the process.

The allocation of SCPI funding was based on a request for proposal process. Other funding agencies in the community also commonly allocate funds based on the merits of competing proposals.

RECOMMENDATION # 44 (green)

We recommend that necessary funding is made available to develop an annual process of updating the "Our Homes and Our Streets" report. This updating should include community consultation in preparing the report as well as discussing success in meeting the needs of diverse cultural and vulnerable groups in the community such as; people who are poor, people with mental health difficulties, people with physical or developmental disabilities, youth, the elderly, people with HIV/AIDS; Immigrants, refugees and newcomers to Canada, Aboriginal persons, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, visible minorities, women, people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, people who experience barriers because of their gender identity, people with addictions, and sex trade workers. (This is not an exhaustive list.) This would help to ensure that a current, accurate picture of homelessness in our community is always accessible. This would help the Regional Advisory Committee on Food and Shelter provide accurate information for service and funding purposes.

Funding has been provided to track, and report on, homelessness trends in Hamilton, and to report on progress on *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* recommendations. In preparing this report card, the SPRC consulted widely with community groups and organizations.

We have also included in this report card a description of some of the work that has been done in the community to address the needs of diverse cultural communities in Hamilton.

3.3 Detailed Progress By Theme Area

Some of the recommendations in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* are complex, and recommend, not one, but a number of separate tasks. The first part of the process thus involved breaking down *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* recommendations into separate tasks.

In a second stage of this process, these separate tasks were re-grouped into theme areas.

Our reason for re-categorizing the tasks recommended in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* was to simplify the way in which tasks are organized for the purpose of future community-based planning initiatives.

In each category, we first give details about those actions that have been taken which have contributed to progress on *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* recommendations. We then list those tasks recommended in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*, which are in progress, and then those which have not been addressed.

A: EMERGENCY SHELTERS AND DROP-INS

Recommendation #1 (Priority)

The following tasks in this category have been addressed: (green)

Emergency shelters have undergone major repairs.

In total, over $1.5 million of SCPI funding has been provided for the renovation of, and repairs to, emergency shelters in Hamilton.

The Mission Services Men's residence has made renovations to its program space, kitchen and dining facilities.

The Hamilton Community Foundation funded Mission Services for improvements to its emergency shelter. Major essential repairs have been made to the Salvation Army Booth Centre.

The Wesley Centre has completed renovations of a separately ventilated smoking room and increased space for bike racks. Completion of the smoking room at the Wesley Centre has reduced loitering outside the building.

The Good Shepherd Centres have made renovations to Brennan House, Notre Dame House, and their Men's Shelter.

As a result of these renovations, services for people using emergency shelters have improved.

The capacity of emergency shelters has expanded.

The number of hostel beds available at emergency shelters in Hamilton has increased.

Renovations during the Winter of 2000 at the Wesley Centre increased the capacity of the facility by allowing for the "overflow" of sleepers to use the dining area. The Wesley Centre and the Out of the Cold program have also purchased additional mats to deal with the increasing numbers of people seeking emergency shelter.

A further $3 million of SCPI funding has been allocated to provide emergency shelter to women who are experiencing homelessness. Plans for a new emergency shelter run by the Native Women's Centre are well underway. SCPI funding has been allocated to The Good Shepherd Centre to relocate and expand emergency shelter services for women experiencing homelessness.

Wesley Urban Ministries in partnership with Living Rock Ministries is planning to open a new emergency youth shelter for 15 individuals this year.

The number of qualified emergency shelter staff has increased.

Wesley Urban Ministries and the Salvation Army have both hired an additional case manager. The Salvation Army is now able to provide case management services to people who are not residents of the hostel. The case manager hired by Wesley Urban Ministries is expected to provide some level of case management for at least 100 clients. Providing these additional case management services is expected to improve each agency's effectiveness in providing opportunities for individuals to move toward independent living.

Mission Services has hired additional crisis intervention staff. As a result, Mission Services has seen a decrease in the number of "serious occurrences"—incidents in which there are significant breaches of the shelter's code of conduct, by either residents or staff—at their Men's Residence.

Training for emergency shelter staff has also been improved. The Toronto shelter system has developed a Toronto Hostels Training Centre, which offers more than 30 workshops on various topics related to providing services in shelters. Some of the major shelters in Hamilton have taken advantage of this resource in a sporadic way by sending staff to training sessions on specific topics. Good Shepherd and Mission Services have signed a SCPI partnership agreement to make more comprehensive use of the expertise of the Training Centre.

The Salvation Army has also hired a part-time nurse to provide for the medical needs of hostel residents.

The Native Women's Centre has also provided training to emergency shelter staff on the complex challenges faced by survivors of the residential school system.

Improvements have been made to emergency shelter services for families.

The Children's Aid Society has received some SCPI funding for a pilot project which is expected to help families stay together by providing temporary hotel/motel accommodations and other services in situations that might otherwise result in children being separated from their families.

The YWCA of Hamilton has partnered with the City of Hamilton's Hostel and Lodging unit to provide emergency shelter beds to women and children when local shelters are at capacity.

The Salvation Army and the Social and Public Health Department at the City have hired a part-time family outreach worker.

Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO), in partnership with Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre, St. Matthew's House and the Housing Help Centre, have received SCPI funding to integrate support services for immigrants, refugees and visible minorities who are experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness. These services may include transitional or temporary accommodations, as needed, for up to 125 families.

The Government of Ontario has recently increased its contribution to emergency shelter costs from $34.50 per person per day to $38.50 per person per day.

While this increase in funding is welcomed by local emergency shelter providers, for many shelters in Hamilton it does not reflect the real, current cost of providing a person with emergency shelter.

Recommendation #7

The length of time individuals can stay at an emergency shelter has increased from seven days to six weeks.

Over the past year, however, the Food and Shelter Advisory Committee has worked with the City of Hamilton to have the "seven day rule" changed so that emergency shelters can receive the per diem rate ($38.50 per person per day) for up to 42 days.

This change is expected to provide more stability in the lives of people who use the emergency shelter system.

Recommendation #12

Temporary funding has been provided to emergency drop-ins so that they can operate on a 24-hour basis.

Wesley Urban Ministries has received SCPI funding, as well as funding from other sources, to maintain 24-hour drop-in services for people experiencing homelessness.

Recommendation #1 (Priority)

Providing cultural sensitivity and anti-racism training for emergency shelter staff.

It has been mentioned that the Native Women's Centre has provided training to shelter staff on the effects of the residential school system on aboriginal survivors. Further, Emergency shelters in Hamilton have received SCPI funding for comprehensive staff training at the Toronto Hostels Training Centre, and will include an anti-racism component. To date, comprehensive training for emergency shelter staff is not yet in effect.

The Salvation Army Booth Centre has formalized an agreement with SISO. SISO has translated documents related to individual use of the services at the Booth Centre, and also, in some situations, works directly with newcomers to Canada who are using Salvation Army services.

Gathering better statistics on the use of emergency shelters by aboriginal people.

Research undertaken by the Hamilton Aboriginal Executive Director's Coalition, *The Homelessness Trail: The Voice of the People* provides important statistics on the crisis of homelessness within the aboriginal community. However, there is still no system in place to gather better statistics on emergency shelter use by aboriginal people.

The Homeless Individuals and Families Information System, or HIFIS, is Canada's national electronic data management system. It is aimed to facilitate the collection and reporting of data on the homeless population, and will be useful for tracking this particular statistic among others. Work by staff at the City of Hamilton over the past year has resulted in it being implemented in many of the city's shelters. It has not yet been used to gather statistics, and will not be used in this way until it is fully implemented. The rest of the shelters, plus the second level lodging homes in the City, should have it installed before March 2003.

Recommendation #4

Ensuring the accessibility of emergency drop-ins for people who have traditionally faced barriers to accessing these services.

B: FOOD SECURITY

[redacted]

Recommendation #31 (Priority)

An assessment of emergency food program resources is underway.

Food Share (Greater Hamilton) is currently doing a "logistical survey" of the agencies involved in the emergency food system in Hamilton. The data collected will include information on storage facilities, transportation resources, and staffing. The survey is expected to provide more detailed information than has previously been available about the way emergency food programs in Hamilton currently operate, with the goal of improving the way the current system functions.

A client survey and an agency survey have been developed and sent to local food banks to identify trends in emergency program use.

Food Share (Greater Hamilton) is also in the process of collecting responses to a detailed survey of people who use emergency food programs. The information being collected includes standard demographic information, as well as things like employment status and history, income source and experiences with income support programs, household resources, use of the food bank system, housing details, and self-identification of major household issues. This information will be used to go beyond basic food bank usage statistics to get a better idea of the circumstances surrounding and causing the need for emergency food supports.

The North Hamilton Community Health Centre in partnership with the Social and Public Health Services Department of the City of Hamilton produce the Food Access Guide, a comprehensive listing of food security programs in the City.

[redacted]

Recommendation #5

Improving the accessibility of meal programs.

The North Hamilton Community Health Centre covers cab fare for men who are homeless or in transitional housing to come to the Centre, and by making initial contact outside the Centre in an environment that is comfortable to them. These measures have made their Community Kitchen program more accessible. This is the only improvement to the accessibility of meal programs in Hamilton. Reported by Community Organizations in the Homelessness Report Card Survey.

Living Rock Ministries has expanded its emergency food programs for street-involved youth.

Improvements to the accessibility of meal programs in the City as a whole have been limited.

Recommendation #8

Developing a more coordinated schedule of emergency food security programs.

Preparing and distributing an inventory of breakfast programs for people experiencing homelessness and people with low incomes who require emergency food assistance.

Food programs in Hamilton such as food banks and meal programs have expanded over the last year. A number of breakfast programs for children have been established or expanded. The Hamilton Community Foundation has provided funding for breakfast programs for children operated by Hamilton's Boards of Education. However, an inventory of these programs has not yet been compiled.

Recommendation #31 (Priority)

Researching effective ways to encourage collective kitchens, community gardens, and other sustainable models of food security.

The North Hamilton Community Health Centre is currently applying for funding to establish a network of community gardens and kitchens in the North end of Hamilton. This project, if funded, could provide information about effective ways to encourage further local food security initiatives.

C: OUTREACH

The following tasks in this category have been addressed: (green)

Recommendation # 2 (Priority)

Outreach services for people coping with mental health issues, addictions, developmental or physical challenges, and people experiencing homelessness have been expanded.

With funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Mental Health Outreach team at the City of Hamilton has hired a full-time street outreach coordinator, a full-time youth outreach worker, and a part-time family outreach worker.

Outreach staff at the City have part-time contracts with other community organizations in Hamilton, such as the Wesley Centre and the Housing Help Centre.

The Good Shepherd Centres have developed a new service to support youth under 17 years old who are coping with mental health issues.

Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre has hired city outreach staff to focus on issues faced by youth, racial minorities, and people at-risk of homelessness funded, in-part, by the United Way.

As a result of these additional staff, more connections are being made with street-involved youth, injection drug users, people coping with mental health issues, and people experiencing homelessness generally. This has improved access to services, information and case management for people experiencing homelessness.

24-hour outreach services have been established for people coping with mental health problems, addictions, developmental or physical challenges, and people experiencing homelessness.

The Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST) is a mobile crisis intervention program that responds to individuals coping with mental health issues who are in crisis, and who may be at-risk of harming themselves or others. This program now operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Coordination of existing outreach services has been improved.

In the past year, a Street Outreach Steering Committee has been formed. As a result of the work of this committee a list of outreach services, hours, and staff has been developed and is updated on a regular basis.

A committee of street outreach workers has also been formed to coordinate efforts, and discuss common concerns and issues.

D: INCOME SUPPORT AND BENEFITS

The following tasks in this category have been addressed (green)

Recommendation #32

The Housing Emergency Loan Program (H.E.L.P.) has received funding to expand its services.

The Housing Emergency Loan Program has received SCPI and United Way funding to expand its loan program, which assists low-income individuals and families to avoid eviction.

The following tasks in this category are in progress: (yellow)

Recommendation #29 (Priority)

Lobbying the Provincial government to improve income security programs for people with low incomes (Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program).

The Campaign for Adequate Welfare in partnership with the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton held a community forum to provide an opportunity for individuals living on social assistance to voice their concerns about the inadequacy of welfare rates.

The Campaign for Adequate Welfare, as well, has provided information to opposition critics in the Provincial Legislature on the inadequacy of social assistance rates.

[redacted]

Recommendations #20 and #30 (Priority)

Lobbying the Provincial government to change social assistance procedures to allow tenants who are temporarily hospitalized or incarcerated to continue to pay their rent until they are discharged.

In response to a recent Divisional Court ruling, *Director of ODSP v. Eluck*. The Ontario Disability Support Program Branch has temporarily revised its policy, and will suspend rather than cancel income support for some individuals who are incarcerated, reinstating benefits when they are discharged. This policy will only be applied in those cases where a person was receiving income support prior to the inception of ODSP.

This temporary policy change will not provide the income support necessary for someone to continue to pay his or her rent while incarcerated.

Recommendation #26

Ensuring that 16 and 17 year olds can receive social assistance without having to meet the school attendance requirements.

E: HOUSING SUPPORT

The following tasks in this category have been addressed (good)

Recommendation #14

Improvements have been made to services that assist people with limited incomes to find and maintain housing that is safe and affordable.

The Hamilton Community Foundation funded one component of the Tri-Rock program, established by Living Rock Ministries, which educates street-involved youth about housing related issues.

Loans provided by the Housing Emergency Loan Program, in some cases, now cover utilities, moving expenses, and Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal fees. The number of loans provided by the Housing Emergency Loan Program has risen from an average of 6 to 12 per month.

The United Way of Burlington, Hamilton-Wentworth has provided funding to the Housing Help Centre, the Hamilton YWCA and Sacajawea Non-Profit Housing to enhance their housing support services.

Wesley Urban Ministries has increased its efforts to move clients of Wesley Centre from emergency shelter to the 31 units of shared accommodation housing offered at Wesley Community Homes.

The Native Women's Centre received SCPI funding targeted to the aboriginal community to implement an emergency voucher system to assist with food, seasonal clothing, over the counter medicine, and transportation. In some cases, this assistance has helped individuals and families to avert a housing crisis.

More resources are being put toward advocating on behalf of people in danger of losing their housing.

Advocacy efforts have been increased at the Native Women's Centre and the North Hamilton Community Health Centre.

As a response to this recommendation in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*, Hamilton's Community Legal Clinics have diverted community development and public education resources towards ensuring that low-income and vulnerable tenants are provided with legal advice and assistance.

The Visiting Homemaker's Association in partnership with St. Matthew's House has received funding to hire a manager and other staff to support independent living for seniors. Part of this work will involve advocating on behalf of seniors to ensure that they have access to needed services. It is expected that this will help avoid crisis situations and prevent evictions.

Recommendation #35

An early intervention project has been established to assist those facing eviction to maintain their housing.

Hamilton's Community Legal Clinics and the Housing Help Centre, in partnership with the Solutions for Housing Action Committee (SHAC), has established the Eviction Prevention Program that provides information packages to all tenants in Hamilton who are facing eviction. The Hamilton Community Foundation has provided funding to evaluate this project.

Recommendation #37

A program has been established to assist low-income tenants, and people experiencing homelessness, to move or store their possessions.

The Salvation Army has established a program to assist people with low incomes, and people experiencing homelessness, to move or store their possessions free of charge.

Both the Native Women's Centre and the Housing Emergency Loan Program have received funding to cover the moving expenses of some of the people who use the services of these organizations.

F: HEALTH CARE

The following tasks in this category have been addressed: (green)

Recommendation #9

Health care services for people experiencing homelessness have been improved.

The Salvation Army has hired a public health nurse part-time.

As a result of renovations, the Mission Services Men's Residence has constructed two interview rooms, which public health nurses are now using to conduct examinations. Renovations to Mission Services have made the Men's Residence more accessible for people who use wheelchairs or walkers.

A nurse practitioner from the Aboriginal Health Centre is now coordinating health services for youth at "the Rock" (Living Rock Ministries).

Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre reports an increase in the number of clients accessing primary oral health care.

The North Hamilton Community Health Centre has opened an emergency dental clinic for people experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness. The dental clinic at the North Hamilton Community Health Centre now operates 3 days a week, instead of 2, to meet increasing demand.

A working group has been established to identify gaps in health care services for people experiencing homelessness.

The McMaster School of Nursing has received SCPI funding to undertake an assessment of the health care needs of people experiencing homelessness. A community-based committee has been established to oversee this research project.

Recommendation #10

Funding has been provided to improve health care outreach services for people experiencing homelessness.

Funds have been provided by the Rotary Club, SCPI program and the Hamilton Community Foundation for a Community Health Bus. A City transit bus has been retro-fitted and is now making weekly stops at the Wesley Centre and other locations in Hamilton.

See also OUTREACH

G: PERSONAL SECURITY

The following tasks in this category have been addressed (green)

Recommendation #11

I.D. clinics have been established to assist people experiencing homelessness to secure personal identification.

Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre has received SCPI and United Way funding to expand services that assist individuals to replace identification that has been lost or stolen.

Mission Services has at least doubled the resources put toward covering the costs of replacing social insurance cards and birth certificates.

Hamilton Urban Core now has the capacity to safely store personal identification for people experiencing homelessness.

The following tasks in this category are in progress: (yellow)

Recommendation #38

Re-establishing the Voluntary Trusteeship Program.

Mission Services, the Salvation Army and the Good Shepherd Centres have received SCPI funding to operate a collaborative trusteeship program. From the information gathered through the survey and follow-up phone interviews, it was unclear whether this program would be entirely voluntary.

H: DISCHARGE PLANNING

The following tasks in this category are in progress: (yellow)

Recommendation #6

Providing crisis/transition beds for people who are being discharged from hospitals or prisons.

The Bridge Program received some SCPI funding last Winter to provide transitional beds for people who had been recently discharged from prison. Through the increase in transition beds for people recently discharged from prison was only temporary, SCPI funding has been provided to establish an additional eight transition beds.

Recommendation #3

Establishing a pro-active standardized discharge process for people who are hospitalized or incarcerated.

I: TRANSITIONAL AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

The following tasks in this category have been addressed: (green)

Recommendation #34

Research has been completed on supportive housing programs for people coping with mental health issues and developmental or physical challenges.

The Hamilton District Health Council has completed a report on housing and support requirements of people coping with a serious mental illness.

Freedom House, in partnership with the Social Planning and Research Council, has completed a study that assesses the housing needs of people with disabilities in Hamilton. This project was funded through SCPI.

Dr. Robert Wilton, with the support of the Second Level Lodging Homes Tenants' Committee, produced a research report documenting the conditions of lodging home tenants, and recommends an increase in the personal needs allowance they receive.

Transitional housing and some kinds of supportive housing programs have improved.

Hamilton Housing Corporation has received SCPI funding to improve supports for tenants in two supported housing projects run by the municipality. It is expected that these additional support services will improve the quality of life for tenants living in those buildings and reduce tenant turnover.

Mission Services has purchased an old hotel to provide 22 transitional housing beds for people who have experienced homelessness, and are in the Mission Services continuum of support. This hotel was serving as a lodging house when it was purchased, and the individuals living there at that time have made the transition to apartments. At present, they are only able to utilize part of the hotel's capacity, but plans are being made to further expand this service.

Phoenix Place has laid the groundwork to add two units to its transitional second stage housing facility. As well, they have hired a full time counselor to assist in the provision of supports in the house, and outreach support in the community. A full-time fundraiser has also been hired to ensure the sustainability of this program.

Visiting Homemakers Association, St. Matthew's House, and Hamilton Housing Corporation have recently received SCPI funding for a Homelessness Intervention Project that will provide some supports (case management, advocacy, referral) to older adults with low incomes. It is expected that this will help some individuals and older couples to avoid a housing crisis.

The District Health Council has distributed a "Tool for Assisting Care Transitions" to the Street Outreach Steering Committee. Using a standardized language, this tool (TACT) is expected to improve transition planning when clients are moving from one facility to another.

The following tasks in this category are in progress: (yellow)

Recommendation #1 (Priority)

Establishing a "Settlement House" for immigrants and refugees who are newcomers to our community.

Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO), in partnership with Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre, St. Matthew's House and the Housing Help Centre, have received SCPI funding to integrate support services for immigrants, refugees and visible minorities who are experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness. These services may include transitional or temporary accommodations, as needed, for up to 125 families. The partner agencies are working towards the development of a settlement house.

A Settlement House is transitional housing for new immigrants and refugees. It provides temporary accommodations to new residents of Canada, and a site where they can learn skills and information to allow them to function in their new environment. It also provides an opportunity to connect them to support systems that exist in the community. These skills, information, and connections to support will help them acquire and retain permanent housing. While there are organizations in the community that provide many of the support components of a Settlement House, there is currently no permanent, physical site for the provision of this specialized kind of transitional housing. Agencies in the community are holding on-going discussions on the issue.

Recommendation #15

Temporary funding has been provided for transitional housing services for women survivors of abuse.

Emergency SCPI funding to Second Stage Services in June of 2001 allowed the agency to stay open, and continue offering their 20 units of post-emergency shelter housing to women and children survivors of abuse. Second Stage Services have been without stable funding since the provincial government cut it in 1995, from which time they have been existing on a small city grant and fundraising efforts.

The SCPI funding has allowed them time to develop a sustainability plan. Negotiation of a partnership with a larger agency, which has a more stable funding base, is almost complete. A subsequent SCPI grant is being used to allow them to add 10 more units to their service.

Recommendation #21

Some recommendations of the Housing Development Group's report, "Supported Housing for People with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness: A Plan for Hamilton-Wentworth" are being implemented.

An Assertive Community Treatment program for people with severe and persistent mental illness has been developed and funded.

The Supported Housing Coordination Network is in the process of negotiating funding through the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care for the development of crisis beds to be used as an alternative to hospitalization.

The Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST) has received funding to provide 24 hour assistance to individuals with serious mental illness in acute distress, in the environment of their choice.

Various advocacy and education measures have been taken around second level lodging home licensing and regulation, and around more general issues of serious mental illness and housing.

[redacted]

Recommendations #22 and #23

Improving training for the staff of second-level lodging homes.

Providing training to the operators, staff and tenants of second-level lodging homes on the rights and obligations of landlords and tenants under the *Tenant Protection Act*.

Involving tenants and operators of second-level lodging homes in the organization and planning of educational workshops on issues affecting the operation of second-level lodging homes.

J: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The following issues in this category have been addressed [illegible]

Recommendation #13 (Priority)

The downloading of social housing from the Province to the City has not resulted in the sale of public housing units.

During the preparation of the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* there was discussion at Queen's Park concerning the sell-off of single detached family homes prior to the transfer of social housing from the Province to the City resulting in the loss of rent-geared-to-income units. This did not happen, in part due to the lobbying efforts of community organizations in Hamilton.

City Staff and housing advocates in Hamilton have been involved in lobbying senior levels of government on issues related to non-profit housing.

Through the Housing Division, the City participates in the Federation of Canadian Municipalities National Housing Policy Options Team, which is active in lobbying senior levels of government on a number of issues including the provision of affordable housing.

As well, as a non-profit housing provider, the City is involved with the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) which is active in advocating for non-profit housing.

Different models for increasing Hamilton's stock of safe, adequate, affordable housing are being examined.

The Housing Division at the City of Hamilton has prepared a plan to increase the stock of affordable housing in Hamilton, and has committed staff resources to looking at different ways of increasing Hamilton's stock of affordable housing.

The Board of Directors of the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton-Wentworth (SPRC) has identified increasing Hamilton's affordable housing supply as a priority for the organization. Staff at the SPRC are beginning to examine strategies for increasing the City's affordable housing supply.

The following tasks in this category are in progress: (yellow)

Recommendation #17

Adapting the current CHAN waiting list model to more effectively meet the needs of people who urgently require affordable housing.

A group of representatives from community organizations is currently working on making changes to the CHAN waiting list model. However, progress on this recommendation is behind schedule according to the time lines laid out in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*.

Recommendation #18

Working to ensure that people with literacy or language difficulties remain on the CHAN waiting list despite problems they might face in responding to written or oral requests for information.

A group of representatives from community organizations is currently working on making changes to the CHAN waiting list model. However, progress on this recommendation is behind schedule according to the time lines laid out in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*.

[redacted]

Recommendation #24

Lowering property tax rates for multi-residential buildings.

Property tax rates for new construction of multi-residential buildings have been lowered. While this change may provide some incentive for developers interested in building rental housing, this policy change does not affect the property tax rate for existing multi-residential buildings.

Recommendation #36

Monitor rates of conversion of rental housing units to condominiums.

The City of Hamilton has policies in place to minimize the loss of affordable rental housing through "condo conversions." However, little information has been provided to community organizations about the rate of condo conversions in Hamilton. This has hampered the ability of community organizations to independently monitor the rate of conversions and, if necessary, to lobby for policy changes on this issue.

K: ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS FOR YOUTH

The following tasks in this category are in progress: (yellow)

Recommendation #19

Some alternative educational opportunities for street-involved youth have been established.

Notre Dame House and Living Rock Ministries have both made improvements to their educational programs for youth.

We consider this progress limited, however, since no action has been taken to develop alternative educational opportunities within the public education system to accommodate those youth who might otherwise drop out, or be kicked out, of school.

L: PUBLIC EDUCATION

The following tasks in this category have been addressed: (green)

Recommendation #33

Funding has been provided to the Tenant Education Project.

The Solutions for Housing Action Committee (SHAC) has received SCPI funding to provide tenant education, and resources to tenant organizations.

The following tasks in this category are in progress: (yellow)

Recommendation #13 (Priority)

Some educational materials have been provided to inform rooming house tenants about their rights.

The Roomers and Boarders Committee continues to work with rooming house tenants, and has provided some information to rooming house tenants to inform of their rights.

Recommendation #27

Community organizations have been working to clarify and disseminate information on the policies and practices of Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program.

A community forum was held to clarify the policies and practice of Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

Hamilton's Community Legal Clinics have worked with other community organizations to disseminate information about the availability of the Community Start-up Benefit (CSUB).

Homelessness Initiative Campaign for Adequate Welfare (HICFAW) held a community meeting to share stories about the inadequacy of social assistance rates and problems that people receiving social assistance have experienced when dealing with the bureaucracy that administers social assistance in Hamilton.

The Housing Emergency Loan Program regularly informs people on social assistance who come to them for assistance of the availability of the Community Start-up Benefit.

Recommendation #25

Some training programs for health and social service students have been developed to educate them about the challenges facing people who experience homelessness.

Mohawk College has added a module on housing and homelessness to a required course in its social service worker program.

As well, courses related to homelessness are now being offered at McMaster University.

In the view of the authors of this report, this task has only partially been addressed. More work will need to be done to educate all health and social service students about housing and homelessness issues, as per the recommendation.

Recommendation #42

An educational campaign is underway to increase public understanding of the issues facing people experiencing homelessness and hunger-related issues.

A number of community organizations provide public education on homelessness and hunger-related issues in a variety of forums.

The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton-Wentworth has received SCPI funding to hold a series of seven community forums on homelessness. The first of these forums was held in January 2002, Exposing the Myths of Homelessness. There were approximately 200 people in attendance. A second forum was held in February 2002 on the topic of discrimination and homelessness, which was attended by more than 170 members of the community.

The Food Focus Group, a sub-committee of the Food and Shelter Committee is currently working on a public education campaign on hunger-related issues to be launched in December 2002.

M: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

[redacted]

Recommendation #41

Representatives from various community organizations are involved in discussions with the City of Hamilton about the transfer of social housing from the Province to the City.

The City of Hamilton has established the Community Consultation Committee of Social Housing to consult on the Joint Local Transfer Plan for the transfer of social housing, and to establish a protocol on areas of municipal flexibility with respect to the *Social Housing Reform Act*. In addition the Committee is to act as a consultative body for the City with on social housing issues.

Recommendation #44

Community groups and organizations were consulted in the preparation of this report card.

The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton-Wentworth consulted with focus groups, key informants, and area committees in preparing the framework for this report card.

Approximately 60 community agencies responded to an extensive survey sent to them by the SPRC to gather information for this report card.

[redacted]

Note: The Community Advisory Board requested that all proposals for SCPI funding demonstrate how they have involved consumers in determining needs and planning.

Recommendation #1

Involving people who have experienced homelessness in the assessment of emergency shelter needs.

Involving people who have experienced homelessness on committees dealing with homelessness issues.

Establishing a homelessness help group, based on a peer support model, for people experiencing homelessness.

Recommendation #42

Some people who have experienced homelessness have been involved in educating the public about homelessness issues.

While some people with a history of homelessness attended the community forums that have been held by the SPRC, more work needs to be done to include people with a history of homelessness in the organization and planning of these events.

N: RESEARCH AND PLANNING

The following tasks in this category have been addressed (green)

Recommendation #28

Some plans have been developed to provide for the needs of older adults and youth experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness.

The Visiting Homemaker's Association in partnership with St. Matthew's House has received funding to hire a manager and other staff to support independent living for older adults.

Living Rock Ministries and Wesley Urban Ministries, in partnership with other community agencies, have been very active in planning for the housing needs of youth.

Recommendation #39 (Priority)

Staff have been made available to provide support to community organizations and the municipal government for the purpose of implementing the recommendations of the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*.

In June 2000, the SPRC hired a Homelessness Project Coordinator to assist with the development and subsequently support the work of the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*. That person resigned in July 2001, at which time the funding for the position was not forthcoming. Recently, the SPRC received further funding through the Provincial Homelessness Initiative Fund and is in the process of

re-staffing the Homelessness Project Coordinator position.

The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton-Wentworth (SPRC) has hired two and a half full-time staff to work on homelessness issues.

An important part of the work the staff working on homelessness issues at the SPRC is to provide support to community organizations working on housing and homelessness issues. The support that the SPRC provides to organizations working on housing and homelessness issues has increased in the last year.

The City of Hamilton has also hired staff to administer and evaluate the SCPI program.

Recommendation #40

Eviction Statistics, and the situations that result when people are evicted from their homes, is being collected.

Eviction statistics for Hamilton that are currently available have been included in the homelessness trends section of this report. The Sheriff's office of the Attorney-General of Ontario maintains some records on eviction rates in Hamilton. At present, these records are not publicly available.

Recommendation #44

Funding has been provided to update and report on homelessness trends in Hamilton.

This report card describes some of the work that has been done in the community to address the needs of diverse cultural communities in Hamilton.

The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton-Wentworth has received SCPI funding to produce two annual report cards on homelessness in Hamilton that will update and report on homelessness trends in Hamilton.

3.4 Analysis

3.4.1 Overall Progress

Green Recommendations

15 of the 44 recommendations in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* have been addressed with some degree of success.

SCPI funding contributed to progress on 10 of these 14 recommendations.

Many of the SCPI-funded projects that have contributed to the success of these 10 recommendations provide support services to people experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness. These include staff resources for outreach, health care, and housing support services to people experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness.

The 10 SCPI-funded projects also include, tenant education, the Housing Emergency Loan Program (HELP), research to track homelessness trends, and the expansion of the I.D. clinic services at Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre.

Yellow Recommendations

A further 18 recommendations in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* have been partially addressed.

SCPI funding contributed to progress on 10 of these 18 recommendations.

Many of the SCPI-funded projects that have contributed to progress on these 10 recommendations provide support services to people experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness as well as capital expenditures to renovate and expand emergency shelter services in Hamilton.

These 9 SCPI-funded projects also include case management services at emergency shelters in Hamilton, 24 hour drop-in services, transitional housing for women survivors of abuse, public education, and support services for older adults.

[illegible]

10 of the 44 recommendations in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* have not been addressed. These 10 recommendations that have not been addressed cover such issues as: discharge planning, accessibility of services, provincial policy changes, and a reduction of tax rates on multi-residential buildings. Most of these recommendations are outside of the funding terms and conditions of SCPI.

We were unable to gather sufficient evidence to evaluate recommendation #16.

We are making progress on a good number of recommendations, and moving ahead on a number of other recommendations. What this evaluation shows is that overall progress on the implementation of the *Community Action Plan* on Homelessness is good.

Much of this activity has been due to SCPI funding. Of the 32 recommendations that have shown some signs of progress, SCPI funding has contributed to progress on 19 of these recommendations.

Further, the fact that SCPI funding was allocated on the basis of the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* recommendations shows that overall the community has been working hard to address the recommendations in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness.*

Developing Community Partnerships

The results of our survey also show that the community has been working closely together to address these issues.

An impressive range of new partnerships have been formed over the past year.

The development of the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* involved the formation of working groups, many of which are now functioning as committees.

A number of other committees have been formed to guide the day-to-day operations of some of the new projects funded through SCPI and other funding agencies in the community.

The Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI)

Through the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, the Government of Canada made a commitment to making a one-time contribution of $12.9 million to the City of Hamilton over three years to address the crisis of homelessness in our community.

A further $300,000 was provided to the aboriginal community under SCPI. As well, $2.1 million of SCPI was allocated to Hamilton to addresses homelessness among young people in our community.

The evaluation in this section focuses only on the nearly $13 million of SCPI funding distributed in the community by the City of Hamilton and the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness. The Community Advisory Board consists of community volunteers with knowledge and experience in either homelessness issues or the broader Hamilton community. They have donated many hours of their time and energy to ensuring that the SCPI funding is allocated according to the *Community Action Plan* on Homelessness and community need.

The range of project activities that are eligible under SCPI is narrower than the range of activities recommended in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*; within this limitation, funding provided through SCPI was distributed on the basis of *Community Action Plan* on Homelessness recommendations.

After the funding was announced, one of the first tasks of the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth was to prepare *An Addendum to the Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton-Wentworth.* The purpose of the Addendum was to identify which project activities fit with both the recommendations in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*, and the scope of eligible SCPI activities.

The *Community Action Plan on Homelessness in Hamilton-Wentworth* addresses a broad range of issues. The 44 recommendations for action in the plan cover such area as

- Emergency food and shelter
- Support services for people experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness
- Poverty
- Transitional and supportive housing, and
- Affordable housing

In terms of the causes of homelessness outlined in the INTRODUCTION, the SCPI funding was intended to address the lack of support services in our community. These support services include: emergency food and shelter; housing support, health care, and outreach services; as well as transitional and supportive housing services.

There have been significant improvements to all of these services in Hamilton in the past year, due to SCPI funding as well as a host of other funders who have made homelessness a priority. Even before SCPI funding was announced, approximately $20 million dollars was spent in Hamilton on homelessness issues in 1999.

However, it is clear from our research that SCPI funding, as allocated by the Community Advisory Board, has contributed significantly to improving support services for people experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness in Hamilton. This success is further magnified by the fact that much of the SCPI funding was allocated only 6 months prior to the SPRC survey being circulated.

As well, the funds have been distributed fairly evenly across the full range of eligible SCPI activities. These include: capital improvements to the emergency shelter system in Hamilton; improvements to outreach, health care and housing support services, and improvements to some transitional and supportive housing services. Funding has also been provided for the evaluation of programs and services and other research, as well as public education.

Sustainability

The SCPI program is the first new influx of significant funding to flow into Hamilton since homelessness began to escalate. Because of the amount of money now flowing, we also wanted to identify progress that was made possible through SCPI.

There are a number of programs and services for people experiencing homelessness, and which help to prevent people from becoming homeless, that are currently under development as a result of SCPI funding.

According to the assessment of overall progress, the SCPI funding has contributed to progress on 19 of the 44 recommendations in the *Community Action Plan* on Homelessness. We anticipate that this number will increase in the coming year as programs and services that have only recently received funding are developed and become operational. As well we expect further progress on a number of the recommendations that our research here shows have already shown signs of progress.

One of the criteria set by the Government of Canada for SCPI funding required eligible projects to outline a sustainability plan if those projects intended to continue operations after the three-year funding cycle ends in March 2003.

Our research confirms what has been known in the community for some time, that many of the essential programs and services developed with the help of SCPI funding will not be sustainable after March 2003.

Some of the projects funded through SCPI, capital improvements to emergency shelters in Hamilton, for example, will be sustainable after March 2003, since these projects requiring a one-time capital investment do not require substantial on-going maintenance costs.

Other projects, such as the Housing Emergency Loan Program, differ from most other non-profit ventures for people experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness, since it is possible to recover a portion of the money that is distributed in the form of emergency loans to people facing a housing crisis. The Housing Emergency Loan Program will be able to recover some of these loans, but is likely to require an on-going subsidy to continue operating at present levels of service after March 2003.

Some of the programs and services developed with the assistance of SCPI funding will be sustainable after March 2003 because they have secured alternative sources of funding. However, a number of the essential programs and services, specifically those that require significant staff resources such as outreach, housing support, and health care services, will not survive after March 2003, unless alternative funding sources are identified. If these funding sources cannot be identified, and essential programs and services are not sustained after March 2003, then progress made on some of the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* recommendations will cease.

The following is a list of *some* of the programs and services that could be lost to our community after March 2003 unless the Provincial government or Federal government contributes additional funding to maintain these programs and services at current levels.

- staff resources for outreach services, health care, and housing support services for people experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness
- case management services at emergency shelters in Hamilton
- transitional housing services for women survivors of abuse

At this point, it is unclear where our community will find the substantial financial resources to maintain these essential programs and services. In general, the City of Hamilton and community funding agencies do not have the capacity to provide the funding that we anticipate will be needed to maintain all of these programs and services. However, the City of Hamilton, community funding agencies and senior levels of government have an important role to play in ensuring that essential programs and services are maintained, and that progress made in the past year on *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* recommendations is not lost.

More research will need to be done by the community to determine the total amount of funding that will be required to sustain these essential programs and services after March 2003.

Transitional Housing for Women Survivors of Abuse

One of the crucial services that could be threatened after March 2003 unless some alternative source of funding is not secured, is transitional housing for women survivors of abuse. Transitional housing was identified as a key step in moving people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness into stable housing. This is especially true for women survivors of domestic violence who have utilized the emergency shelter system. Without transitional housing (with supports) to move to, women may end up back in abusive relationships, or on the street.

Emergency SCPI funding was given to Second Stage Services in June of 2001, to bridge a funding crisis in that agency that has been ongoing since the province cut their budget in 1995. The funding allowed them to develop a sustainability plan and enter into partnership with another agency to ensure their survival. While it was vital and laudable that SCPI was able to come to the rescue, it is inexcusable that so important a service was almost lost. Recommendation # 15 needs to be moved to centre stage and addressed immediately.

Priority Area Recommendations

Part of the process of developing the *Community Action Plan* on Homelessness involved holding a community forum to identify which of the 44 recommendations in the *Community Action Plan* on *Homelessness* most urgently needed to be addressed. A voting process was held, and seven PRIORITY AREA recommendations were chosen.

To better understand what the community most urgently needs to focus on in the coming year, we provide here a thematic analysis of those priority area recommendation tasks that have not been addressed.

First we provide a complete list of these priority area recommendation tasks that have not been addressed. We then provide an analysis of these tasks in order to identify key theme areas that the community will need to focus on if the priority area recommendations are to be successfully addressed, and go from red or yellow to green.

The following chart is a complete list of PRIORITY AREA recommendation tasks that have not been addressed.

Chart #18: Tasks from Priority Area Recommendations That Have Not Been Addressed

Priority Area Recommendation	Priority Area Recommendation task
1	Providing cultural sensitivity and anti-racism training for emergency shelter staff.
1	Gathering better statistics on the use of emergency shelters by aboriginal people.
1	Involving people who have experienced homelessness in the assessment of emergency shelter needs.
1	Involving people who have experienced homelessness on committees dealing with homelessness issues.
1	Establishing a homelessness help group, based on a peer support model, for people experiencing homelessness.
1	Ensuring the accessibility of drop-ins.
13	City Staff and housing advocates in Hamilton have been active in lobbying senior levels of government on issues related to non-profit housing. The Provincial and Federal governments have not, however, renewed their commitment to developing non-profit housing.
13	Educating rooming house tenants about their rights.
29	Lobbying the Provincial government to improve income security programs for people with low incomes (Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program).
30	Lobbying the Provincial government to change social assistance procedures to allow tenants who are temporarily hospitalized or incarcerated to continue to pay their rent until they are discharged.
31	Researching effective ways to encourage collective kitchens, community gardens, and other sustainable models of food security.

Poverty

Priority Area recommendations #29 and #30 deal with poverty issues, and recommend that our community lobby the Provincial Government to revise social assistance rates and policy to reflect the real costs of living in our community.

It also becomes clear from looking at this list that a large number of those tasks that have not been addressed deal with issues of discrimination.

Some of the recommended tasks in Chart 18 suggest innovative ways that these poverty issues and discrimination issues can be addressed.

A number of the tasks left undone recommend the involvement of people with a history of homelessness, on committees, as researchers, and as organizers. Jim Ward has recently published a national study on how to involve people who are experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness in the work of community organizations.[15] See appendix E.

Recommendation #31 in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* suggests the need to find local, neighbourhood level solutions to food security issues. Again this recommendation suggests an effective way to address poverty by working locally to empower individuals and neighbourhoods to better meet their own needs.

Discrimination

One way of defining discrimination is the lack of voice, when decisions which affect the lives of new immigrants for example, are made without hearing their real concerns and needs because they are excluded from taking part in decision-making processes.

One way of giving voice to people who are marginalized is to provide the supports and opportunities they need to meaningfully participate in community development. Only with the appropriate supports, and resources, can these communities meaningfully participate in community development processes that will address their concerns and needs.

Aboriginal people, new immigrants, refugees, racial minorities, and other marginalized communities in Hamilton face high levels of poverty and are disproportionately represented among those people who are forced to resort to emergency food programs and emergency shelter.

To seriously address the high levels of poverty and the discrimination faced by aboriginal people, new immigrants, refugees, and other marginalized communities in Hamilton, it will be necessary to work more closely with these communities, and provide them with the supports and opportunities they need to meaningfully participate in community development and decision-making.

To supplement the data collected by the community survey on homelessness, an additional set of questions was asked to find out more about what is being done in the community to address the needs of marginalized communities--racial minorities; women; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered persons; older adults; refugees and other newcomers to Canada; people with physical disabilities; people coping with mental health issues; street-involved youth; and aboriginal people.

The responses to the survey turned up little original information, but confirmed what was demonstrated in the rest of the survey. There were some new initiatives related to street-involved youth and to people coping with mental illness, a research project that explores the housing needs of people with physical disabilities, and some new efforts to address the needs of new Canadians and older adults.

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[15] Jim Ward Associates (2002), *Involving Homeless and Formerly Homeless Clients in Projects and Programs to Address Homelessness.*

Some of the efforts that were reported involved the provision of services, but few had obvious measures to provide the supports and opportunities that people who face discrimination need to meaningfully participate in community development and give voice to the real concerns and needs of these communities.

Non-Profit Housing

Finally, Recommendation #13 recommends that the Provincial and Federal Governments renew their commitment to developing non-profit housing.

The Federal Government has recently announced that it will provide $680 million nationally, over four years, to build affordable housing. While a final deal between the Federal and Provincial governments has not been announced, it appears that this funding will target public-private partnerships, and will contribute part of the cost of building rental housing to private developers. It is still unclear how, under this program "affordable" is to be defined, and how private developers who have a legitimate interest in maximizing profits will result in a sustainable stock of affordable rental housing.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities estimates that nationally there is a need for approximately 20,000 units per year over the next ten years.[16] This number falls within the target range specified in the Federal Liberal government's "Red Book III." The proposed Federal program falls far short of this target, and is estimated to produce 5,000 to 10,000 units a year over the next three years.

While this funding is certainly welcome, and will relieve some of the strain on the current rental housing market, there is still a need to develop a long-term Federal affordable housing strategy that will alleviate the burdens of poverty and discrimination faced by low-income tenants in the current housing market, and help us to avoid the crisis of homelessness in Hamilton from spiraling out of control.

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[16] Federation of Canadian Municipalities (1999) *National Housing Policy Options Paper: A Call for Action.*

3.5 KEY FINDINGS

- Overall progress on the recommendations of the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* is good.
- The community has been working closely together to address homelessness issues.
- The recommendations in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* dealing with poverty, discrimination, and non-profit housing urgently need to be addressed.
- SCPI funding has contributed significantly to the improvement of the emergency shelter system in Hamilton.
- SCPI funding has contributed to the enhancement of support services for people experiencing homelessness, and programs that help prevent people from becoming homeless.
- Many of the essential programs and services developed with the help of SCPI funding will not be sustainable after March 2003.
- Transitional Housing services for women leaving abusive domestic situations have been in crisis over the past year. Immediate work needs to be done by the community to ensure the stability and further the expansion of this much needed service.
- Even with improvements to support services and the emergency shelter system in Hamilton, the problem of homelessness in Hamilton will only get worse if poverty, discrimination, and the lack of affordable housing in our community are not addressed.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Tasks in the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* dealing with issues of poverty and discrimination need to be addressed immediately.

2. Support should be given to the aboriginal community to address the extreme levels of poverty and homelessness among native peoples in Hamilton. (One way of doing this would be to assist the aboriginal community to implement the recommendations of *The Homelessness Trail: The Voice of the People*, a community-based research document that recounts the plight of aboriginal homelessness in our community. See Appendix A.

3. The community should work to provide aboriginal people, new immigrants, refugees, racial minorities and other marginalized populations the supports and opportunities they need to meaningfully participate in community development and decision-making.

4. The opportunities and supports needed to meaningfully participate in the community as volunteers, emergency shelter staff, committee members, and researchers should be available to people with a history of homelessness. (A national report on *Involving Homeless and Formerly Homeless Clients in Projects and Programs to Address Homelessness*, produced by Jim Ward Associates, is in its final stages of preparation. See Appendix E for the recommendations of this report).

5. Local, neighbourhood level solutions to poverty, food security and other issues should be explored and implemented.

6. Immediate work needs to be done to ensure the stability and further the expansion of transitional housing services for women leaving abusive domestic situations.

7. The community should lobby the Federal Government to provide on-going funding for programs and services developed under the SCPI program.

8. The community should lobby, and then work with, the Federal and Provincial Governments to develop long-term national and provincial strategies to deal with poverty and the lack of affordable housing.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Report Card on Homelessness has identified key trends and progress made on the status of homelessness in the City of Hamilton. It gives direction on the issues that are still outstanding from the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* as well as detailing what new trends have emerged since the Plan was written in 2000. The Report Card offers the tools needed to move to the next stage for the Plan.

The *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* was never intended to be a static document. As recommendations are successfully implemented and new trends emerge, the Action Plan needs to be modified and updated to remain a relevant useful document for this community. The Report Card on Homelessness has made a first attempt at identifying areas where the Action Plan needs to be revised, but it is the right and responsibility of the community to respond to these recommendations and further identify other issues that are impacting on the homeless situation.

Furthermore, the most up-to-date information on homelessness resides in the experiences of the people who live in this community. They are the people who work front-line at the emergency shelters and meal programs, the people who are or who have been homeless and the friends and family's of people who are at risk of homelessness. Talking to community members in a comprehensive and methodological way will ensure that the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* is as relevant and living as this City.

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APPENDIX A

Recommendations From The Homelessness Trail: "The Voice of the People"

Executive Summary

NATIVE HOME PROVIDERS IN ONTARIO
CITY OF HAMILTON ABORIGINAL HOMELESS PROJECT

Executive Summary

The purpose of this project was to gain a better understanding of the Aboriginal absolute and relative homeless population in Hamilton, to identify their needs, and to develop a framework to address those needs, improve existing Aboriginal and mainstream services and develop new services to help people who are homeless and to prevent those on the margins of becoming homeless.

The methodology for the project involved the design and implementation of a survey of Aboriginal homeless people, agency interviews and surveys and a community form, held on February 23rd, 2001. A total of 202 interviews were completed. The survey process was successful, but challenging, because it is difficult to identify Aboriginal homeless people during the winter months, the timeframe was short and many refused to be surveyed because they felt uncomfortable or did not believe it would be worthwhile. The community forum was a success. It included traditional drumming, dancing and singing, speeches by Elders, a sharing circle, a free lunch, displays by service agencies and photography exhibit. Approximately 300 attended and 85 surveys were completed.

The following statistics highlight the survey results for Aboriginal relative and absolute homeless people in Hamilton:

- 53% women, 46% men; 62% single, 13% married; 69% Status Indian
- 21% Absolute Homeless (29% of whom could not afford housing), 53% Relative Homeless
- Absolute Homeless: 74% use food banks, 58% use clothing depots, 47% use shelters
- Relative Homeless: 66% use food banks, 32% use clothing depots, 15% use shelters
- Agencies used: Good Shepherd (45%), Salvation Army (41%), Wesley Centre (35%), St Matthews (30%); rating: excellent (23%), good (37%), fair (24%)
- Gaps in service: lack of awareness (14%), accessibility/location (13%), hours (11%)
- Use of services: 47% of Absolute Homeless use daily, 28% weekly
- Why services are used: shelter (30%), food (23%) (Absolute Homelessness)
- Comfort using services: 16% very, 42% fairly, 31% not (not welcomed, degrading)
- Existing services O.K.? 50% yes, 50% no (needed more help, degrading)
- Aboriginal services needed? 85% yes
- Special cultural needs: 44% absolute homeless (ceremonies, language)
- Awareness of agencies: 61% HRIC, 1/3 UNH, AHAC, Native Women's Centre
- 70% found the Aboriginal agencies useful
- Gaps in Aboriginal services: need for family programs, weekend services, better location, support groups, referrals

- Types of Services needed: Absolute homeless: Aboriginal transitional housing (28%), drop-in (19%)
- Types of Services needed: Relative homeless: food programs, counseling/rehab/outreach, transitional housing.

Based on the results and analysis of the surveys, interviews and community forum, the following recommendations were prepared.

1. Increase access to culture, spiritual & traditional healing:
    - Arrange for Elder visits at mainstream shelters
    - Increase promotion of De dwa dehs nye>s traditional healing program
    - Schedule drop-in times at De dwa dehs nye>s
    - Make referrals to Aboriginal addiction programs
    - Host more cultural events (change of seasons), traditional lunches at foodlines
    - Develop a traditional community garden. Grow traditional medicines.

2. Better coordination among/between mainstream & Aboriginal service providers. Establish partnerships with existing mainstream organizations, so Aboriginal agencies can incorporate a cultural component in existing services, & mainstream staff can be trained to better serve Aboriginal clients.

3. Have a strong Aboriginal voice on decision-making committees at all levels to ensure the Aboriginal community receives its share of funding, programs and services.

4. Prevent people from becoming homeless:
    - Transition house to help people re-integrate into society
    - Inform people of the health and social support
    - Job search, resume & interview preparation, training, pre-employment skills lifeskills, career planning & educational upgrading with access to computers/internet
    - Child support for single parents so they can upgrade their schooling, attend post-secondary education, take training, search for a job an/or take on a job
5. Develop additional Aboriginal specific programs/services for homeless to fill gaps:
    - Shelters for men, youth and families, targeting the poor (men, women and families), mentally ill, incarcerated, disabled, elderly, victimized
    - Increased affordable permanent assisted housing
    - Soup kitchens with Aboriginal volunteers serving traditional foods
    - Crisis Management Teams to help when the programs & services are closed.

6. Provide temporary/part-time/end-of-month supports for relative homeless, such as:
    - utility rebates
    - financial planning & budgeting

- shopping for good quality food & clothing at low cost
- DART transportation subsidies for disabled
- Temporary financial help

Next Steps

- Present findings to community in community forum
- Conduct additional research with absolute homeless & front-line mainstream & Aboriginal front-line workers, as required
- Investigate best practice models
- Find funding
- Implement recommendations

Thank you

We would like to say Nia: Weh, Meegwetch and Thank You to everyone that participated in the creation of this document. Most importantly, we would like to acknowledge our Creator for providing us with the STRENGTH in achieving this vital project. The enclosed findings were gathered through a flurry of activities and a highly energized staff and our community volunteers. To all our professional Service Providers and community agencies, your expertise, support and data provided for this project, is immeasurably recognized. We trust that you will continue to join us in addressing Homelessness in the NEW CITY of HAMILTON in the hopes of providing a better world for *"the faces yet to come"*.

APPENDIX B

Homelessness Report Card Survey

HOMELESSNESS REPORT CARD SURVEY INSTRUCTION SHEET

«FirstName» «LastName» - «Title»
«Company»

The Survey Questions in this booklet have been divided into categories. In this survey, you will be asked to review the survey questions in the following category(s) - «surveys» (see the complete list of categories below).

Step 1: Please **review the survey questions** in the category(s) **«surveys».** You may want to place a check mark beside those survey questions to which you would respond "YES".

It is important to remember the following points in answering the survey questions:

- All of the survey questions in this booklet can be answered "YES" or "NO". **You will only have to answer "YES" to a few of the questions in the categories we have asked you to review.** There is thus no reason to feel bad about answering "NO" to most of the questions in a particular category. Most organizations surveyed will only need to fill out an Activity Reporting Form for a small number of questions.

- **The purpose of this survey is to gather information about changes in the work of your organization over the past year.** The SPRC recognizes that your organization may have been working in areas related to homelessness for some time. What we are looking for, however, is a description of the activities of your organization above and beyond what your organization was already doing prior to 2001.

  If your organization received additional resources (not limited to SCPI funding), or reallocated resources to work on homelessness, we are interested in gathering infonnation about what, in general terms, your organization did with those additional resources.

  Examples of "activities":

  - Hired a staff person to help people find and maintain housing
  - Prepared, and published, a report on supportive housing
  - Formed a committee to work on tenant education

- Finally, the categories that we have asked you to review were determined on the basis of recommendations in the Community Action Plan on Homelessness, the allocation of SCPI funds, and our understanding of the work of your organization. Please review the survey questions in any of the following categories that you think we may have overlooked. All agencies should review the questions in the section "Addressing the Needs of Vulnerable Populations" on **Page 6** of this booklet.

A) Emergency Shelters & Drop-ins **pg. 1**
B) Food Security **pg. 1**
C) Outreach **pg. 2**
D) Income Support and Benefits **pg. 2**
E) Housing Support **pg. 2**
F) Health Care **pg. 2**
G) Personal Security **pg. 3**
H) Discharge Planning **pg. 3**
I) Transitional & Supportive Housing **pg. 3**
J) Affordable Housing **pg. 3**
K) Alternative Schools for Youth **pg. 4**
L) Public Education **pg. 4**
M) Community Involvement **pg. 4**
N) Research and Planning **pg. 5**

Step 2: If your answer is "YES" to any of the questions in the survey, please fill out an **Activity Reporting Form**. Please make additional copies of the **Activity Reporting Form,** as needed. *(If you would like the SPRC to send you more copies of the Activity Reporting form, please contact us at 905-522-1148).*

Please refer to the following definitions in completing the Activity Reporting forms.

An **"Activity"** is any action that your organization has taken in the last year that has contributed to progress in the areas described by the survey questions (See examples on the front page of the Instruction Sheet)

An **"Outcome"** is any measurable result of these activities.

Examples of "outcomes":

- # of new emergency shelter beds or transition beds
- increase in the # of individuals provided with a service
- # of new staff or volunteers
- # of staff or volunteers trained
- Increase in the # of meals served

Step 3: Return completed Activity Reporting Forms to the SPRC,either by **Mail**, using the enclosed envelope, or **Fax**. Our fax # is 905-522-9124.

A) EMERGENCY SHELTER AND DROP-INS

1. The Community Action Plan identifies the training of emergency shelter staff--specifically, cultural sensitivity and anti-racism training--as a concern. It is also recommended that the number of qualified shelter staff be increased. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

2. In the past year, has your organization planned for the maintenance, modification and expansion of emergency shelters in Hamilton?

3. The Community Action Plan states that it is vitally important that all drop-ins provide a welcoming environment to all members of our community, including those persons who have traditionally faced barriers to accessing these services. Has your organization taken action in the past year to improve the accessibility of drop-ins?

4. In the past year, has your organization taken action to improve services to families experiencing homelessness who are unable to access the current shelter system?

5. Has your organization put in place a system for gathering accurate statistics on the use of emergency shelters by aboriginal people?

6. Has your organization taken action in the past year to have the "seven day rule" changed to allow individuals to stay longer at emergency shelters in Hamilton?

7. In the past year, has your organization increased the resources that are put towards advocating with the relevant levels of gov't to ensure that funding for emergency shelter operations reflects real, current costs?

B) FOOD SECURITY

8. The Community Action Plan recommends that meal programs should be made more accessible to groups that have traditionally faced barriers to accessing these programs. Has your organization taken action in the past year to improve the accessibility of meal programs?

9. In the past year, has your organization taken action to develop a more coordinated and simplified schedule of food programs (food banks, meal programs, etc.)?

10. The Community Action Plan recommends that an inventory of breakfast programs be compiled, and that this inventory be distributed widely to organizations working with people experiencing homelessness and people with low incomes who rely on food programs. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

11. The Community Action Plan recommends that a research proposal be prepared to examine systemic barriers to food security, and effective ways to encourage collective kitchens, community gardens, and other innovative and sustainable models of food security. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

12. The Community Action Plan recommends that food program resources be assessed, and developing trends in food program use are identified. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

C) OUTREACH

13. In the past year, has your organization taken action to expand outreach services for people coping with mental health problems, substance abuse problems, developmental or physical challenges, or people experiencing homelessness?

14. Has your organization taken action to establish 24-hour outreach services for people coping with mental health problems, substance abuse problems, developmental or physical challenges, or people experiencing homelessness?

15. In the past year, has your organization taken action to improve the coordination of existing outreach services and organizations involved in discharge planning?

D) INCOME SUPPORT AND BENEFITS

16. The Community Action Plan recommends that community organizations lobby the provincial gov't to: (a) reinstate cuts to social assistance to their 1995 levels plus inflation; (b) base the shelter portion of social assistance rates on the average rent of vacant rental market units; (c) increase social assistance rates administered through the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) to account for inflation; and, (d) restore discretionary benefits for people receiving social assistance through ODSP. It is also recommended that these efforts be coordinated with provincial organizations (such as the Ontario Coalition for Social Justice or the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association). Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

17. The Community Action Plan recommends that social assistance procedures be changed to allow tenants who are temporarily hospitalized or incarcerated to continue to pay their rent until they are discharged, and that community organizations lobby the provincial government to make this change. It is also recommended that these efforts be coordinated with provincial organizations (such as the Ontario Coalition for Social Justice or the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association). Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

E) HOUSING SUPPORT

18. In the past year, has your organization taken action to make improvements to services that assist people with limited incomes to find and maintain housing that is safe and affordable?

19. Has your organization taken action to establish a moving program that assists low-income tenants to move for a nominal fee (or free of charge)?

20. The Community Action Plan recommends that the eviction prevention program developed by the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation in Toronto (CERA) should be adapted for use in Hamilton. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

21. In the past year, has your organization increased the resources that are put towards advocating on behalf of people in danger of losing their housing?

F) HEALTH CARE

22. In the past year, has your organization taken action to improve access to dental care, and other health care services, for people experiencing homelessness

23. The Community Action Plan recommends that a working group be established to determine gaps in health care services for people experiencing homelessness. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

G) PERSONAL SECURITY

24. Has your organization established a program to help individuals secure personal identification?

25. Has your organization taken action to re-establish the Voluntary Trusteeship Program?

H) DISCHARGE PLANNING

26. Has your organization taken action to establish a pro-active, standardized discharge process for people who are hospitalized or incarcerated?

27. In the past year, has your organization taken action to provide crisis/transition beds for people who are discharged from hospitals and prisons?

I) TRANSITIONAL AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

28. The Community Action Plan discusses the need to research and develop improved supportive housing programs in Hamilton. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

29. The Community Action Plan discusses the need to research and develop improved transitional housing programs in Hamilton. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

30. Has your organization taken action to implement the recommendations made by the Housing Development Group in their report entitled "Supported Housing for people with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness: A Plan for Hamilton-Wentworth"?

31. In the past year, has your organization taken action to ensure that the Provincial gov't, and other levels of gov't, provide stable funding for transitional housing services for women survivors of abuse?

32. The Community Action Plan expresses the need for better training of, and improved supports for, the staff of second level lodging homes. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

33. In the past year, has your organization provided training on the rights and obligations of tenants and landlords for the operators, staff, or tenants of second level lodging homes?

34. The Community Action Plan recommends that tenants and operators of second level lodging homes should be involved in organizing any educational workshops on issues affecting the clients or operation of second level lodging homes. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

J) AFFORDABLE HOUSING

35. The Community Action Plan recommends that community agencies work to ensure that public housing units are not sold, and that they lobby the Provincial and Federal gov'ts to renew their commitments to developing non-profit housing for people with low incomes. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

36. In the past year, has your organization explored successful models for the creation of affordable housing, or innovative ways to utilize the existing non-profit housing stock?

37. In the past year, has your organization taken action to preserve Hamilton's existing rental housing stock?

38. The Community Action Plan recommends that the rates of conversion of rental housing to condominiums should be monitored, and that action should be taken to ensure that existing rental units are not converted to condominiums. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

39. In the past year, has your organization increased its support to tenant advocacy groups that are seeking to preserve or expand the existing stock of public housing in Hamilton?

K) ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS FOR YOUTH

40. The Community Action Plan identifies a need for alternative schools for youth who are coping with psychiatric or developmental issues, who are experiencing homelessness, or who are trying to leave abusive family situations. Has your organization taken action in the past year to address this need?

L) PUBLIC EDUCATION

41. The Community Action Plan recommends the development of a public education campaign that will increase public understanding of the issues facing people who experience homelessness and hunger-related issues. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

42. The Community Action Plan recommends the development of a training program to ensure that all health and social service agency staff and students throughout the community are educated about homelessness. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

43. The Community Action Plan recommends that information sessions and community forums should be held to clarify and disseminate information on the policies of Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), and changes to these policies recommended in the Action Plan. Recommended topics include: (a) the inadequacy of social assistance rates, policies regarding bank accounts for people on social assistance, (b) the eligibility criteria for 16 and 17 year olds, and (c) the Community Start-Up Benefit (CSUB). Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

44. In the past year, has your organization taken action to educate rooming house tenants about their rights?

M) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

45. The Community Action Plan recommends that people who have experienced homelessness should be represented on the Shelter Working Group, and that they should be involved in the assessment of emergency shelter needs and in educating the public about homelessness issues. In the past year has your organization taken action to ensure the involvement of people who have experienced homelessness in decision-making, research, or in educating the public about homelessness issues?

46. In the past year, has your organization taken action to establish a Homeless Help Group, based on a peer support model?

47. In the past year, has your organization set in place any mechanisms to provide for direct community involvement in municipal discussions about the downloading of public housing to the city, or supported tenant advocacy groups who are seeking to increase the supply of public housing in Hamilton?

48. In the past year, has your organization consulted with community members in the preparation of major reports on homelessness trends in Hamilton?

49. The Community Action Plan expresses the need to plan for, and establish, a "settlement house" for immigrants and refugees who are newcomers to our community. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

N) RESEARCH AND PLANNING

50. In the past year, has your organization done any research on the levels of funding provided to housing support services and/or the demand for these services?

51. In the past year, has your organization developed a process for obtaining information on eviction rates and the situations that result when people are evicted from their homes?

52. Has your organization included eviction statistics in any major reports on homelessness trends in Hamilton?

53. In the past year, has your organization developed any plans to provide for the housing needs of seniors, youth, or people coping with a substance abuse problem?

54. The Community Action Plan recommends that major reports on homelessness trends in Hamilton describe the success in meeting the needs of diverse cultural communities, and groups that are vulnerable to homelessness. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

55. Has your organization prepared proposals for potential funders to provide resources to tenant organizations?

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Different populations that have historically been marginalized in our society have higher poverty rates, and face greater barriers to finding safe and affordable housing. The purpose of the following list of survey questions is to gather information about the work of your organization over the past year that has contributed to addressing the needs or concerns of people in Hamilton who may be identified as belonging to one of the following populations that experience increased vulnerability to homelessness.

56. In the last year, has your organization taken action to address the needs of **visible minorities** who are experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness?

57. In the last year, has your organization taken action to address the needs of **women** who are experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness?

58. In the last year, has your organization taken action to address the needs of **lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered** people who are experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness?

59. In the last year, has your organization taken action to address the needs of **older adults** (65+ years and older) who are experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness?

60. In the last year, has your organization taken action to address the needs of **refugees and other newcomers to Canada** who are experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness?

61. In the last year, has your organization taken action to address the needs of **people with physical disabilities** who are experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness?

62. In the last year, has your organization taken action to address the needs of **people coping with mental health issues** who are experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness?

63. In the last year, has your organization taken action to address the needs of street-involved **youth,** or youth who are at-risk of homelessness?

64. Has your organization taken action to implement the recommendations of "The Homelessness Trail: The Voice of the People," a report on the crisis of homelessness among **aboriginal people** in our community?

HOMELESSNESS REPORT CARD SURVEY
ACTIVITY REPORTING FORM

1. **Please indicate the number of the Survey Question on which you are reporting: _____** *i.e.: 39*

PLEASE PRINT

2. **What actions has your organization taken in the last year that have contributed to progress in this area?** (**Special Note:** If the activities on which you are reporting were in part funded through SCPI, you have the option of sending us the SCPI Results Reporting Template that summarizes these activities).

____

____

____

____

3. **Please specify any positive outcomes that have been achieved as a result of these activities.**

i)____

ii)____

iii)____

4. **Please list any community partner agencies if any.**

a. ____

b. ____

c. ____

d. ____

5a. Were you aware of "The Community Action Plan on Homelessness" prior to receiving this survey?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

5b. Did your organization take action in this area as a response to recommendations in "The Community Action Plan"?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

APPENDIX C

Homelessness Report Card Survey Questions (Funders)

HOMELESSNESS REPORT CARD SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. In the past year, has your organization provided funding for an integrated health care outreach team in Hamilton?

    a) To which organization(s) was this funding provided?

    ____

    ____

    b) What amount of funding was provided to this organization(s)? $__________

    c) When did this organization receive the funding? ____/____/____
    Mo. Day Year

2. In the past year, has your organization provided funding to housing outreach services for people experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness?

3. In the past year, has your organization provided funding to the "LINKS" Voice Mail Project?

4. In the past year, has your organization provided funding to the Housing Emergency Loan Program in Hamilton (H.E.L.P.)?

5. In the past year, has your organization provided funding for the maintenance, modification, and expansion of emergency shelters in Hamilton?

6. In the past year, has your organization provided increased funding for breakfast programs in Hamilton that serve people who are experiencing homelessness, or people with low incomes who rely on food programs?

7. The Community Action Plan recommends that the eviction prevention program developed by the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation in Toronto (CERA) should be adapted for use in Hamilton. Has your organization provided funding for this project?

8. In the past year, has your organization provided stable funding for a program that assists individuals secure personal identification?

9. In the past year, has your organization provided funding to re-establish the Voluntary Trusteeship Program?

10. In the past year, has your organization provided, or increased, funding for housing support services in Hamilton?

11. In the past year, has your organization established stable funding to drop-ins for people who are experiencing homelessness so that they can operate on a 24-hour basis?

12. In the past year, has your organization provided funding or other resources to tenant organizations, housing support agencies, or legal clinics, for tenant education?

13. The Community Action Plan recommends that funding support for the position of Homelessness Project Coordinator be extended to provide on-going support to community-based organizations which are working to implement recommendations in the Community

Action Plan. Has your organization taken action in the past year that has contributed to progress in this area?

14. The Community Action Plan recommends that funding be provided to update the "Our Homes and Our Streets" report on an annual basis. Has your organization done anything in the past year to contribute to progress in this area?

APPENDIX D

List of Organizations Participating in The Homelessness Report Card Survey

LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE HOMELESSNESS REPORT CARD SURVEY

Campaign for Adequate Welfare (HICFAW)
City of Hamilton-Planning and Development Department-Housing Division
City of Hamilton-Social and Public Health Services
Coalition for Social Justice
Community Housing Access Network
Crisis Outreach and Support Team
Dofasco
Dundurn Community Legal Services
Eviction Prevention Project Steering Committee
Food Share (Greater Hamilton)
Freedom House
Hamilton Accompaniment Team
Hamilton Community Foundation
Hamilton Executive Directors Aboriginal Coalition
Hamilton Housing Corporation
Hamilton Mountain Legal and Community Services
Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
Homelessness Steering Committee
Housing Emergency Loan Program
Housing Help Centre
John Howard Society of Hamilton-Wentworth
Lay Advocacy Group
Living Rock Ministries
McMaster University-School of Nursing
McQuesten Legal and Community Services
Mental Health Rights Coalition
Mission Services-Men's Residence
Mohawk College-Health Sciences and Human Services
Native Women's Centre
North Hamilton Community Health Centre
Phoenix Place
Roomers and Boarders Committee
Second Level Lodging Homes Tenant's Committee
Second Stage Services
Settlement and Integration Services Organization

Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton-Wentworth
Solutions for Housing Action Committee
St. Leonard's Society of Hamilton
Stelco Inc.
Street Outreach Steering Committee
Supportive Housing Coordination Network
Tenant Education Project Steering Committee
The Bridge: from Prison to Community (Hamilton)
The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton
The Good Shepherd Centres
The Regional Advisory Committee on Food and Shelter
The Salvation Army
United Way of Burlington, Hamilton-Wentworth
Visiting Homemaker's Association Health and Home Support Services
Wesley Urban Ministries
Women's Abuse Working Group
YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington
YWCA of Hamilton

APPENDIX E

Recommendations From:
Involving Homeless And Formerly Homeless Clients In Projects And Programs To Address Homelessness.

October 2001

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY OF INVOLVING HOMELESS CLIENTS IN PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS.

October 2001

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the *study Involving Homeless and Formerly Homeless Clients in Projects and programs to address Homeless*, carried out by Jim Ward Associates, 2001. The study was commissioned by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and by Human Resources Development Canada. The recommendations are divided into two sections: (1) recommendations to CMHC and HRDC; (ii) recommendations to agencies working with homeless people.

To CMHC and HRDC

1. That this study be circulated widely to agencies working with homeless people in Canada

2. That a training package be developed, based on this study, that will assist agencies in the effective involvement of homeless people.

To Agencies Service Homeless People

3. That a policy for the involvement of homeless people be developed within agencies and that boards set up Working Committees for the development of strategies for involving homeless people in the work of the agency.

4. That the policy for the involvement of homeless and previously homeless people be written into the agency bylaw and into the mission statement.

5. That the suggestions made for involvement of homeless people in this study be adopted by agencies in ways that that are modified to meet particular conditions of the agency.

6. That those agencies without active client committees develop such committees as a first priority and that such committees have direct linkages to the Board of Directors, i.e. that there be a client committee report item on every board meeting agenda and that the report be delivered by a client appointed by the client committee for that purpose.

7. That "Client Involvement Coordinator' become the job title, or a the very least part of the job description of a full-time staff person in each agency.

8. That agencies develop a policy to have a certain proportion of board member be homeless or previously homeless people and that a training and support strategy be developed to ensure that such board members play an active and effective role.

9. That agencies work to develop a strategy for hiring homeless and previously homeless people, utilizing the structure suggested in this study as a beginning point.

10. That any research and evaluation initiatives commissioned by the agency involve homeless and previously homeless people.

11. That any building or renovation activity by the agency involve homeless and previously homeless people at all levels.

APPENDIX F

Projects Funded Through the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative

Projects Funded Through the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative

Project Type
Agency, Project Title, Description

Innovation:

Freedom House: Feasibility Study - Feasibility Study for independent living housing project for people with disabilities

Housing Help Centre: Room at the Inn - Production of a 50-minute documentary video "Room at the Inn." The video will explore the social geography and history of several local rooming houses and hotel - taverns.

Prevention/Program

Salvation Army: Share the Warmth - Assistance to low income individuals and families to pay utility bills.

Salvation Army: Moving and Storage - Storage area and moving service for low income individuals and families

Food Share: Resource Development - Staff to expand capacity to develop donations of food

Housing Emergency Loan Program - Funding to enhance capacity of loan program to help low income individuals and families avoid eviction.

Wesley (24 Hour Drop In) - Funding to maintain 24 hour drop in service for people who are homeless and attend the Wesley Centre.

Hamilton Urban Core: Expanded I.D. Clinic - Expansion of services that assist individuals to obtain identification required to receive services and to provide safe storage of same.

Salvation Army: Health Service - Nurse Practitioner on site at Booth Centre during evening hours

Salvation Army: Soup Van - Van providing food and contact to people on the streets

Settlement Integration Services Organization (SISO), Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre, and St. Matthew's House: Emergency Housing for Families - Development of coordinated, integrated strategy for service delivery and support services to homeless immigrants, refugees, visible minorities and low-income families including transitional or temporary accommodations, as needed, for up to 125 families.

Hamilton Housing Corporation: **ROOFS** - Real Options Of Support (ROOFS), supported housing at 95 Hess, 181 Jackson Street to improve quality of life for tenants, create stability in housing at the buildings and reduce tenant turnover.

VHA Health and Home Support Services and St. Matthew's House: **Services for Seniors** - Identification of elderly people who are at risk of homelessness and support services, including on site crisis intervention.

Salvation Army Booth Centre, Wesley Urban Ministries and Housing Help Centre: **Enhanced Case Management** - Integrated case management to connect clients who are homeless or under housed to a case worker in an effort to increase each agency's effectiveness in providing opportunities for individuals to move towards independent living.

SHAC, Dundurn Community Legal Services, Hamilton Mountain Legal Community Services, McMaster University Off Campus Housing Office, SISO, SPRC and Second Level Lodging Home Tenants Committee: **Tenant Education** - Tenant education and research through written materials, public speaking, media work and street outreach.

Good Shepherd Centres: **Enhanced Case Management** - Enhance current case management services at the Men's Shelter and Mary's Place to strengthen the capacity to identify and address the issues contributing to repetitive shelter use.

Native Women's Centre: **Transitional Support** - Emergency intervention program to speed native women's move from shelter to permanent housing and to assist those at risk of homelessness maintain current permanent housing.

McMaster University School of Nursing: **Health Assessment** - Comprehensive health needs assessment to gauge prevalence and priority of health problems in order to develop a community action plan for health care for the homeless.

Food Share: **Client Survey** - Food Bank client survey to improve understanding of who uses food banks and why.

City of Hamilton: **Community Health Bus** - A multipartner community collaboration to develop and implement a pilot project to retrofit a city transit bus for use as a mobile primary care unit. The Community Health Bus (CHB) will target children, youth and their families in a geographic area that faces know risk factors to becoming homeless.

Children's Aid Society: **Temporary Family Support** - Pilot project to ensure retention of the family unit by use of temporary hotel/motel accommodations and or cleaning services in emergency situations that could result in children being separated from their families.

Phoenix Place: **Transitional Support** - Additional staff to increase the number of second stage unites in Hamilton and to reduce the length of stay at hostels through case management and follow-up support.

Second Stage Services: Transitional Support - Additional staff to increase the number of second stage units in Hamilton and to reduce the length of stay at hostels through case management and follow-up supports.

City of Hamilton: Enhanced Case Management - Additional Staff, clerical, a hostel worker and a nurse, to improve services at hostels and to provide more effective monitoring of residential core facilities.

McMaster School of Nursing in partnership with Wesley Urban Ministries: Youth Homelessness - A pilot project to provide future direction and goal setting to motivated street youth in a setting to leave the street culture in a setting removed from the downtown core.

Youth (funded by HRDC)

Living Rock - The proposed activities include renovating space in the basement to create a nursing station, improve the area where the Food Bank is located and enhance purchases donated to meet the needs of this youth population. This money will also enable the hiring of part-time janitorial staff and of a Food Bank Coordinator.

Capital

Wesley Urban Ministries: Environmental Improvements - Construction of an indoor ventilated area for people who attend the Wesley Centre

Native Women: New Women's Shelter - Capital contribution toward acquisition of a new site and construction of new shelter.

Good Shepherd: Women's Centre - Funding towards new shelter for single women who are homeless.

The Bridge: Bridge House - Purchase and renovation of building to provide transitional housing and program for people who are discharged from prison.

Repairs

Mission Services - Renovations of program space, kitchen and dining facilities at Men's Residence.

Salvation Army Booth Centre - Partial funding for essential repairs to the existing facility at 94 York Boulevard.

Urgent Needs

Second Stage Services - 9 months funding to allow agency to deliver service and develop plan for longer term sustainability.

Source: City of Hamilton

Urgent Winter Needs Homeless Projects

The following Urgent Winter Needs Projects were approved by the Community Advisory Board (CAB). These decisions have been reached by consensus after the CAB had thoroughly reviewed the proposals. There were a total of 22 proposals submitted. Twelve proposals were approved by the CAB and ran from December 2000 through the end of April 2001.

Ecumenical Downtown Ministries - This project involves the provision of warm winter coats and underwear through the Stone Mason's Cottage "free clothing outlet". The clothing outlet is operated by the Ecumenical downtown Ministries Steering Committee, who's members are downtown churches and businesses. Project would end by April 2001.

NOTE: The Good Shepherd Centres of Hamilton are one of the principal providers and administrators for a number of shelters, soup kitchens and clothing distribution.

Good Shepherd Centres Hamilton - This project provides infrastructure to purchase a second boiler for a youth shelter as their existing boiler is insufficient to provide both heat and hot water to service the youth who are staying here.

Good Shepherd Centres Hamilton - This project provides for the food needs of homeless individuals this winter. Emphasis is on ensuring not only sufficient food is available but also on improving the nutritional quality of the food by ensuring sufficient fruits, vegetables and protein is available to meet the health needs of the homeless.

Good Shepherd Centres Hamilton - This project is supplying appropriate clothing to prevent cold weather injuries, including such things as blankets, underwear, boots, coats for those on the streets or in danger of becoming so. Requests for clothing is up 20.8% from last winter.

Wesley Urban Ministries - This provides a 24 hour drop in centre by ensuring that funds are available to cover the emergency night shelter from 9pm to 8am and to expand the shelter space available.

MacSOC - This project is for the coordination of volunteer student nurses who provide an outreach service of food clothing and health services to absolute and relative homeless individuals. Partner contributions are significant, when volunteer hours are factored in.

The Bridge - From Prison to the Community - This project is to meet urgent needs for housing faced by those clients who are being released from incarceration. Current project is not meeting needs and winter will escalate demands. It extends a current program from 1 to 3 rooms to address transitional housing.

The Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre - This project prepared and delivered two hundred winter safety kits that included: warm clothing, blankets, underwear, socks and boots.

Living Rock Ministries - This project is a Winter Warm-up program that would provide evening access to a youth food bank, provide warm food and beverages, provide recreational programs, winter clothing, support the youth who have young children, hot breakfast program, needs assessment and referral to other community supports. Living Rock is attempting to reach youth who are unresponsive to traditional supports, offering a place to refuge, safety and shelter.

Housing Help Centre - This project assists single individuals to find and maintain housing by hiring a housing Advocacy Worker who would connect with landlords and tenants in the downtown core, particularly rooming houses to not only get individuals off the street but prevent existing ones from losing their housing.

Mission Services Men's Residence - This project involves the enhancement of the men's shelter which has been identified as over-extended and under-funded. Their goal is to increase the number of homeless men able to use Mission Services Men's Hostel for safe shelter by up to 50%, from 60 men per month to 90. They plan to: increase the number of homeless men moving into transitional or supported housing by 30, presently they have 5 men; to increase the number of men accessing supportive services such as trusteeship and follow-up counselling by 30 cases; enhance the on-going safety and security of all residents when shelter is over normal capacity; and to decrease the current recidivism rate of some current residents by 10 persons.

Housing Emergency Load Program - This project is a community-based revolving loan fund, providing interest-free loans to assist people to maintain affordable housing or attaining a more affordable unit to prevent homelessness. This program will prevent homelessness in Hamilton-Wentworth by giving low-income tenants the resources to maintain affordable accommodations when faced with an emergency situation. Housing Emergency Loans will be provided to people who: are in one month of rent arrears because of an emergency situation, would like to move but cannot afford last month's rent and/or moving costs, need appliances in order to be able to accept subsidized unit, or are in arrears with their utilities. Special circumstances will be considered on case by case basis.

Loans will be repaid over an extended period of time to ensure continued affordability for those in danger of eviction and becoming homeless. The loan base will be replenished as loans are repaid making it possible for many individuals and families in the community to benefit from the program.

The Salvation Army Booth Centre - The overall purpose of this project is to identify and then intervene with people/families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless or at risk of becoming homeless by providing a continuum of services which will reduce/remove that risk and provide supportive services for those who remain on the street. This was done by: going out on the streets with the Community Response Vehicle (mobile kitchen) every night, to provide practical goods and services to avoid hypothermia, to provide emergency shelter accommodation in the Salvation Army Booth Centre for adult males. At the Booth Centre, providing supportive services, problem solving counselling and referral assistance, to provide front-line health care services to people who are homeless and those who stay at the Booth Centre.

Total Value of all projects approved by the CAB = $484,679

Efforts will continue with the Community Advisory Board and the Community Entity (Social and Public Health Services) for community based coordination of activities for the homeless which will set project priorities and identify initiatives which will improve and prevent homelessness.

Youth Homeless Projects

The Living Rock - A Youth Internship program that will provide life skills development, counselling and work placements.

John Howard Society - A Youth Services Canada Project that provides 16 participants with the opportunity to confirm career plans, acquire valuable work experience and assist homeless youth of Hamilton.

Employment Assistance Service

An Employment Resources centre was established at Wesley Urban Ministries to assist homeless individuals to obtain employment.

An Employment Assistance service was contracted with Marty Karl Centre to assist individuals who were homeless or were at risk of becoming homeless to obtain employment.

Source: Hamilton HRDC Annual Report 2000 - 2001